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THE

TWIN SISTERS;

OR, THE

EFFECTS OF EDUCATION.

A NOVEL;

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

BY A LADY.

VOL. I.

DUBLIN:

Printed for H. COLBERT, No. 136, Capel-ſtreet.

M,DCC,XCII.

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BRITISH MUSEUM
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THE TWIN-SISTERS.

LETTER I.

Mrs. Boothby to Lady Eglington.

AT length the firſt wiſh of my heart is accompliſhed—Heaven gives me once more to addreſs my loved Lady Eglington from my native clime, after an abſence that, however long, could never in the leaſt abate either my affection for her, or my attachment to dear, dear England. But now—how the idle forms of Eaſtern ceremonies, how the ideas of luxuries and pomps fade away before the ſenſations hourly riſing in my boſom, as I embrace ſome friend reſtored, or gaze on the delightful ſcenes where once they were enjoyed! Yet to what drawbacks are human felicities expoſed? and how ſevere a check did mine receive when firſt I learned the recent death of your ſiſter, Lady Blomer!—And is that lively ſpirit then ſet for ever! My poor Amelia—I will not wipe away the tear that flows while recollection gives me back the moments paſſed with thee,

whom every ſportive grace attended.—Forgive me, my friend—let me not revive the affliction which I hope begins to ſubſide: with pleaſure I learn the very handſome addition to her fortune one of your danghters receives from the will of her late godmother. Your Amelia is again reſtored to your boſom: I remember you wrote me, not all the advantages to be expected from a town education, nor even the partial affection of Lady Blomer for her adopted child, could reconcile you to parting with her. But you are now indeed rewarded. I am informed, nothing can equal the elegance of her perſon, but that of her twin-ſiſter, whoſe accompliſhments, however great, no doubt muſt yield, in ſome degree, to ſuch as could only be acquired at one of the firſt boarding ſchools in London. How muſt your boſom warm as the excellencies of the lovely pair expand to your tranſported view! Methinks I ſee your and their father's gliſtening eyes riſing in ſilent gratitude to Heaven for the mighty bleſſings, as their praiſes reach your liſtening ears, and vibrate on your hearts! Oh my friends! be all your cares repaid, and every hope fulfilled. For me—how ſhall I anſwer for the deficiencies of my little wild uncultivated bloſſom?—You know we have no proper ſeminaries of education in the Eaſt-Indies, and that young ladies are generally ſent to England for inſtruction. I could

could not part with her—Beſide the fondneſs of my heart that joyed but in its little idol; the length of the voyage—the ſuſpenſe—the numberleſs doubts and fears that diſtracted me on the bare idea, forbade the dreadful trial. I am ſenſible, my dear Lady Eglington, my feelings on this occaſion, however acute, would but poorly plead for the neglect of my child on this important ſubject; and notwithſtanding all I ſhould have ſuffered, I think I would not have been ſo ſelfiſh as to ſacrifice her good to my own eaſe, were it not for ſome further doubts. Whatever might have been the cauſes, I was not always ſatisfied with the examples that returned from boarding-ſchools; nor could a few tinſelled ornaments, however ſhowy, in my opinion, repay the long expecting parents, the anxious moments they had paſt, nor promiſe much advantage to the daughters.

So here is my Emma, the ſimple child of nature, though near thirteen. Such little aſſiſtance as I could give, your Ladyſhip will ſuppoſe has not been wanting; but what could that be beyond a little ſimple reading, writing, or needle-work? As to the ornamental parts of education, the modes of the day are ſo different from thoſe practiſed a few years ſince, that I feared wrong habits might be more prejudicial to her future attempts than total ignorance. However, if I have not to boaſt her acquiſition of thoſe

attainments, I have the ſatisfaction of knowing her mind artleſs and pure; and though as wild and lively as the woodland roe, as innocent and good. You cannot conceive, my dear friend, how I am perplexed about this ſweet girl—I know not whether to prefer for her a boarding-ſchool education, or one at home under my own inſpection: both have their peculiar advantages; emulation and example are conſpicuouſly in favour of the former; but, at the ſame time, attended with danger and inconveniencies from which the latter is exempt. Lady Eglington has tried both with advantage: will ſhe favour me with her opinion? and tell me (if there is a preference) to which ſhe moſt inclines? I ſhall make no apology to a mother—to ſuch a mother for my anxiety on ſo intereſting a ſubject, but wait with impatience for that advice which ſhall inſtantly determine me. This matter once ſettled, where there is no time to be loſt, I ſhall haſten to Eglington Hall, and enjoy that luxury the Indies could not afford me. I do not expect to ſee you here, as Sir Charles can neither ſpare you, nor travel conveniently himſelf. I kiſs his and the lovely ſiſters hands; and am,

My dear Lady,

Moſt ſincerely yours,

E. BOOTHBY.

LET-

LETTER II.

Lady Eglington to Mrs. Boothby.

WELCOME, thrice welcome to England and to me.—Why cannot I fly to embrace the friend of my heart after ſuch a ſeparation? and what avails her arrival if my longing arms yet extend themſelves in vain to preſs her to my boſom? But I will have patience, and wait the promiſed viſit, while with my whole heart—the heart of a trembling agitated mother, I ſubſcribe to the weighty reaſons that detain you.

Amiable woman!—How few mothers of the preſent day can debar themſelves a ſingle pleaſure, even pleaſures (if ſuch they may be called) they are hourly cloyed with! to devote one poor moment, or a ſingle thought, to the little wretches they have brought into the world, only to abandon to its follies! Yes—from their very births abandon, and with the duties, madly deprive themſelves of the thouſand real pleaſures the fond attentive mother only can enjoy. Yet theſe have blindly erred—have erred through ignorance, through careleſſneſs: but I with open eyes—againſt my better ſenſe—with my affections all alive—Oh, Mrs. Boothby! regret not the uncultivated wild of your Emma's mind, ſince, with a few gaudy

flowers, no noxious weeds, no lurking thorns ſhock your weeping eyes, or tear your bleeding heart. "Pure, artleſs, innocent." Oh! the ſweet cherub! you aſk for my advice—Truſt not the treaſure one moment from your ſheltering arms, while her ſoft mind, yet yielding to every impreſſion, requires the care a mother's intereſt alone will beſtow to guard it from the blighting mildews, faſhion now ſhowers around ſo plenteouſly. You call for my experience—Ah! my friend! experienced indeed! you congratulate me—little did you imagine you ſtabbed me to the ſoul: for, Oh Mrs. Boothby! my Amelia—true, ſhe poſſeſſes every charm, every accompliſhment of perſon, but her mind has been totally neglected; or worſe—has been ſuffered to imbibe (nay, from her amazing progreſs, one would imagine had with pains been taught) all that diſſipation, vanity, and folly could impart; and ſuch is now my ſituation, that all thoſe riſing excellencies of Mira, which as you obſerve, ſhould hourly raiſe my eyes in gratitude to Heaven; but wound my conſcience while it owns my poor Amelia had not equal juſtice.

I cannot better anſwer your wiſhes of knowing my ideas on female education, than by tracing to you the outlines of the plan I purſued with ſome ſucceſs, and adding ſome examples of the effects the different mode which divide your choice, have had

on

on each of my daughters. As examples they may afford you more information than any thing I could urge on the ſubject; and, if either my ſucceſs or diſappointment can in the leaſt ſerve as guides to teach you what to purſue or warn you what to ſhun; my pleaſure for the one will be heightened, and my diſtreſs for the other—Ah! can that admit of alleviation?

Near eighteen years ago (immediately after your leaving England) the births of thoſe two darling girls in the ſame hour, made me the happieſt of mothers—for great was the ſatisfaction I promiſed myſelf in devoting all my attention to their good. I began by nouriſhing at each breaſt a lovely babe; for who, like me, could cheriſh them? or, like me, be rewarded by each grateful little ſmile?

How often, as I preſſed them to my full heart, have my prayers implored of Heaven to bleſs their future way—Ruddy health bloomed in their cheeks as they grew, for too delicate treatment enervated not their conſtitutions; and as indulgence encouraged not ill habits, nor ſeverity ſoured their tempers, good nature and vivacity ever beamed in their eyes.

They had attained their ſeventh year, and I was now (delightful taſk indeed) aſſiſting the "young idea" to expand, I had before taught "how to ſhoot;" when my ſiſter,

Lady Blomer, paid us a viſit: a favour indeed—for ſhe ever diſliked the country.

Aſſiſted by their idolizing father, I had already formed the plan of education I intended to purſue: hitherto my attention had been directed to preparing the ſoil for the reception of inſtruction only.

To make them docile without ſervility, gentle without fear, and tender-hearted without weakneſs, had been my principal aim; innumerable little trials daily evinced my progreſs.

You juſtly remark, Madam, that wrong methods are infinitely worſe than total ignorance. I have often heard maſters declare they had generally more trouble to undo than to teach: if this is true, with reſpect to dancing a minuet, or fingering the keys of a harpſichord; how much greater muſt the difficulty be to eradicate from the mind, at the time they take the deepeſt root, thoſe paſſions and humours that, as they "grow with the growth, and ſtrengthen with the ſtrength," muſt ſo ſtrongly prevent the admiſſion of future inſtruction? In a proper preparation, in my opinion, the grand art of education lies.

Lady Blomer, as ſoon as ſhe learned my deſign, was all aſtoniſhment at what ſhe called my ſtrange romantic attempt.—"A country education!" unheard of folly!—Though I had the patience, had I the ability to perform a taſk of ſuch importance? Were

minuets

minuets danced, or rooms entered now as they were a dozen years ago? But, ſiſter, there are good maſters here: by thoſe they may be taught at home.

"Oh the aukward creatures! But admit they may teach a hobbling courteſy, or to thump a fox-chaſe tune; can they give that finiſhing which a boarding-ſchool education only reaches?"

In vain I urged the more neceſſary attainments to be firſt conſidered: and that this ſurpriſing finiſhing might be acquired by being a few months at a ſchool, after a ſolid foundation was laid: Here my lady's patience was quite exhauſted.—"Oh Heavens! a ſolid foundation! and who, my wiſe ſiſter, do you imagine will undertake to mould a ſolid country dowdy into ſhape? Well, well, you may do as you pleaſe with your Mira, but I poſitively inſiſt on your not murdering thus my poor little god daughter: you know I have adopted Amelia as my own, with a deſign of making her heireſs to all I am worth; ſo you cannot, in conſcience, refuſe my entire management of her as I pleaſe: and I will take proper care her education ſhall be equal to her promiſing charms and expectations.

Oh, my dear ſiſter, I replied, cannot my gratitude to you be evinced but by giving up my child? at leaſt, let me not ſeparate the babes who embraced in their very births, and

were never yet aſunder; if I muſt be deprived the delightful employment I promiſed myſelf in their inſtruction (though I cannot conceive the difficulty of it, aſſiſted by their father's leiſure hours), let both go—take, take them both from me—but not to London; at leaſt let me place them where I can be certain their minds, their morals, will be attended to, as well as thoſe mere externals, on which I lay no ſtreſs. I know of two or three boarding-ſchools where I may entruſt them, and be eaſy. There may be many excellent as thoſe, and they are treaſures wherever found: but even the beſt too much neglect the mind; and then, what avails the reſt?

"Pho! Pho!" cried my Lady, "a country boarding-ſchool, indeed—No, no; London—London is the only place for female education! What a piece of work about a woman's mind—one would think you intended your daughters for prime miniſters?"

This, my dear madam, forced a ſmile from me in the midſt of my diſtreſs, while I endeavoured to convince her, that were indeed the minds of men alone worth cultivation, even this would prove the importance of female education; for that not only their manners were influenced by thoſe of the ſofter ſex, but that their virtues and vices alſo ſprung from the ſeeds generally firſt ſown, and directed by a woman's hand.

Lady

Lady Blomer declared all this might be very true (though ſhe underſtood not a word of it) however, ſhe would take her girl immediately to town, and enable her to ſhine in that ſphere for which ſhe was deſigned: bidding me, at the ſame time, conſider whether it would be fair to deprive Mira of an equal chance of improvement with her ſiſter.

Ah! my friend! how did my boding heart reverſe her idea of that equal chance while it was torn by ſo ſevere a trial! It would not be juſt to debar my child of the advantage her aunt intended her (on this condition) of making her heireſs of her large poſſeſſions; and, on the other hand, to riſk her real for the precarious good that mere fortune might beſtow—What a conflict! at length it was decided—I gave way—perſuaded, not convinced: convinced! Ah, no; I had a thouſand doubts, a thouſand fears; and yet I yielded. As the compromiſe of my chuſing the boarding-ſchool was not attended to, I would not truſt them both to chance—both my little treaſures at once!—and one was torn from my aching heart, while I cloſer preſſed the other.

I am aware many, with Lady Blomer, will call my ſcruples on this point romantic: but having ever conſidered it in a view extending to the hereafter, what wonder if I trembled!

In

In whatever light we trace the queſtion, its importance will be evinced; and I am perſuaded the moſt effectual way of checking that general depravity ſo conſpicuous, and ſo univerſally complained of, would be by beginning with a reform in female education.

How have I been aſtoniſhed to behold the very men (their boſoms glowing for the good and glory of ſociety, and of their country) while pointing out to their ſons (perhaps too late) the paths they wiſhed them to purſue; neglecting the daughters on whom the next race of men ſo materially depended.

Thoſe, whom their high-bred mothers had ſcarcely ſeen ſince firſt they threw them on a world they never meant to guide them through; behold now (at a time when moſt they need a mother's care) uſhered from the polite ſeminaries of female education to the drawing-room, and that the beauty heightened by all that exterior refinement can beſtow; inſtantly expoſed to the public gaze of fops, and praiſe of folly, no caution had ever taught them "to ſhun:" not "retiring," but, "obtruſive," and inviting the ſaucy eye, the idle tongue. Their paſſions fluttering uncontrolled on every breath of vanity; the glare of jewels, title, and equipage ſoon fix their whole attention: and if

their

their fathers (unmindfully of affection) have not already bartered for thoſe toys, their daughters happineſs, they yield themſelves the prize to the firſt gaudy bidder that offers. No ſentiment, no delicacy ſway their vacant mind, or ſhould they have heard the ſound, or through the medium of a novel, read of love, their hearts prepared for its earlieſt whiſpers, greedily attend to the firſt fond tales they hear,

" When firſt they hear of Love th' idea warms,
" And plays about their hearts: the wiſh to love,
" They think is love itſelf, nor know the cheat—
" 'Tis new, 'tis pleaſing, and 'tis fancy all!

But ſoon (or rather alas too late) they wake from the deluſive dream, and plunge into the giddy whirl abroad, that promiſes relief from apathy at home. No tender tie of attachment to the father, draws their little offspring nearer to their hearts; but they, in their turn deſert their babes to low and mercenary ſtrangers; while, in a mad purſuit of pleaſure, they diſſipate the property of their children, and ſacrifice their own health and peace, till an haſtened, early death cloſes the melancholy ſcene.

And yet, dreadful as it is; Oh ſhould they find, after they have yielded their hands, the youths to whom indeed they might have given their hearts but for their raſh precipitation;

tation; how then may it be heightened! for what can be their fortitude whoſe paſſions were never reſtrained? or that virtue which no moral precept ever ſtrengthened? what now are the effects of neglect in female education? Lo! where before it fall the ſacred bonds of ſociety—domeſtic faith and happineſs—the rights of property—and all the awful mandates of religion! And now—where now may the proſpect lead? where terminate? Futurity! Oh God preſerve my child! Ah! whither do my thoughts—my apprehenſions—

Mrs. Boothby, my deareſt friend forgive a mother's terrors—I cannot now proceed, but will, while yet my trembling hand permits me, add with what truth I am your own,

M. EGLINGTON.

LETTER III.

Lady Eglington, in Continuation.

WITHOUT any apology for the abrupt concluſion of my laſt, I will reſume my ſubject.

I endeavoured to diſſipate the melancholy that hung heavy at my heart for the abſence of one child, by the cloſer attention to the remaining little ſolitary, though my tears were often ſet flowing by her artleſs enquiries

ries for her ſiſter, for whom ſhe at firſt pined to a degree that alarmed me.

The next three years were devoted to reading, writing, orthography, needle-work, and a little arithmetic.

As Mira's language had been corrected from her firſt ſpeaking, and I had never ſuffered her to be ſpoken to in the childiſh dialect, I had very little trouble to teach her to read and pronounce with propriety. I have already obſerved, the chief art, for the firſt ten years, lies rather in preventing bad habits than in aiming at rapid acquiſition, while the young minds is yet too ſoft to retain it with advantage. Genius (I apprehend) where it appears is often hurt by being puſhed, or exerciſed too early: as flowers forced into ſudden bloom, but ſhow their gaudy heads, and then droop over the ſlender ſtalks, too weak for their ſupport.

As I did not approve of fables, or any kind of allegory which at that age tend rather to miſlead and bewilder, than to improve; Mira's books were ſuch as (neither teeming with the marvellous or unnatural) beſt ſuited her capacity: and as ſhe underſtood thoſe, ſhe could after reading (as I accuſtomed her ever to do) give a perfect account of them. Her little opinions, as ſhe came on, ſerved as exerciſes for her pen, and 'twas aſtoniſhing how this method by degrees threw out and expanded her ideas. Nor let

me

me omit obſerving, the good effects I found in making her explain the meaning of words, and afterwards compare her explanation with that of ſome approved dictionary; the many advantages reſulting from this practice are obvious.

At eleven years of age my dear girl had made a progreſs in every thing ſhe had been permitted to attempt, that anſwered all my expectations, and now the field was to be enlarged, when not only her father, but different maſters were called in to my aſſiſtance.

To excite curioſity, engage attention, and to awaken and call forth obſervation, had been an entertaining part of my former buſineſs: the time was come to yield to the impatience ſhe now thought it the greateſt favour to have an opportunity of gratifying.

In our walks the beauties of a leaf, a flower, the wing of a butterfly, had been the frequent ſubjects of our delight and wonder and then—" Why did mamma raiſe her hands in admiration as ſhe gazed on the ſtarry Heavens?" ſhe had heard too of aſtoniſhing events in hiſtory—of beautiful deſcriptions in poetry "—Mamma ſmiles as ſhe reads ſome books: and Oh how ſhe weeps while peruſing others!" Thus a thouſand little lures were held out with effect.

Though I approve not of wearying children by too great a fameneſs in their exerciſes or cloſeneſs of application, I would ever

ever recommend method, and as exact an appropriation of hours as poſſible. By diverſifying their labours, they are diverted by variety, and though they may not make ſo quick a progreſs as when attending to fewer objects at a time, the improvement (with much more amuſement to themſelves) will in the end be the ſame.

In purſuance of this idea, when now Mira was to be indulged in her wiſhes, as ſoon as thoſe duties were paid that from her firſt liſping tones had ever begun, and ended the day; we accompanied her father to his ſtudy, where beginning with the moſt ſimple treatiſes on the ſubject, ſhe attended a courſe of lectures in natural philoſophy: experiment accompanied each leſſon, and not only ſerved to illuſtrate, but rendered the whole an amuſement. Here too ſhe was taught—

"*To look through nature up to nature's God.*"

And every walk, and all we ſaw and heard, were comments on the morning theme.

But particular care was taken rather to follow than lead, leſt diſguſt ſhould ſucceed ſatiety; and happy was the little naturaliſt when ſhe could engage attention to her favourite ſubject.

One inſtance among many of the good effects this charming ſtudy produced, my good Mrs. Boothby will be pleaſed with.

Obſerving

Obſerving a boy one day diverting himſelf with torturing flies, Mira inſtantly led him to the Solar Microſcope, and magnifying an inſect, told him now he ſaw the circulating blood, and beating heart of that little creature which God had formed with organs perfect as his, ſhe was ſure he never more would be ſo cruel as to hurt beings that (however minute) felt pain as ſenſibly as though they were big as himſelf. She then liberated her captive, and who might not envy her little feelings as ſhe led away her proſelyte in triumph!

After breakfaſt, and an hour's walk, or ſuch recreation as ſhe preferred, my Mira met me in the room ſet apart for the ſucceeding leſſons. Hiſtory was the ſubject of the firſt two hours, and as the foundation of all, we began with the hiſtorical parts of the Bible. Rollin's Ancient and Roman Hiſtories followed, and were ſucceeded by the beſt accounts of the different nations and lives in courſe. A terreſtrial globe, and maps aſſiſted our reſearches, and pointed the ways we travelled. We alternately relieved each other, not only leſt her voice ſhould tire, but to enable the one, while the other read, to purſue whatever piece of work ſhe had in hand: and alſo to produce a habit of attention, the want of which occaſions us to loſe great part of what we hear. I have been told by many, they never could properly

ly underſtand a book they did not read themſelves; and Mira's interruptions with "Mamma pleaſe to repeat that paſſage again"—became every day leſs frequent.

Another hour divided between writing and a French leſſon (which after ſome time was ſucceeded by one of Italian) concluded the morning taſk: and it was amazing my friend to ſee by this regularity of method, how much one may go through in a year: but if once we permit ourſelves to fall into the dangerous habit of procraſtination, or giving way to the laſſitude of the moment (which but increaſes by indulgence) idly wait for more propitious ſpirits; hour after hour glides on, and all are loſt: while perſeverance conquers every thing, and makes us maſters of ourſelves at all times.

'Till dinner the dear girl amuſed herſelf in whatever manner ſhe pleaſed, and was indulged with every thing her little heart deſired that could contribute to her happineſs: but never held out as a reward for what ſhe conſidered as the moſt agreeable employ, for the inſtruction ſhe received, ſhe deemed a favour conferred on her.

When ſhe came on in French, we never ſpoke Engliſh but on ſubjects that required explanation in a language well underſtood.

To make her attentive we entered into an agreement, that a fine ſhould be paid by whoſoever tranſgreſſed the law. Sir Charles had

had given her a ſum of money to be laid out in furniſhing a cloſet with books, maps, globes, &c. and this was to receive ſuch addition as her improvement ſhould require. Not a little was Mira delighted with her cloſet and its contents: from this favourite ſtore her fines were to be deducted, but by way of reconciling her to her loſſes, the whole was once a week to be by her diſtributed among the poor:—and here in the fullneſs of my heart, let me be indulged in relating a little anecdote that preſents itſelf to my memory.

One day ſhe ſo repeatedly tranſgreſſed, and ſeemed ſo ready to mark her forfeits, that I found it neceſſary to aſſume that grave reſerved air, and indifference of manner which had been the only marks of diſpleaſure ſhe had ever experienced, and which to my great ſurprize, did not now produce that inſtantaneous ſenſibility that had hitherto proved the were ſufficient. I then roſe with an intention of quitting the room in ſilence, at the ſame time caſting on her an eye gliſtening with an involuntary emotion at a hardineſs ſo new and unexpected: but here all Mira's fortitude forſook her—ſhe flew after me to the door, and burſting into tears, implored me not to leave her.

"I was offended at your careleſſneſs Mira, but I am afflicted at the diſregard you ſhew for my diſpleaſure."

"Oh

" Oh Mamma, it was not careleſſneſs—it was intention."

I was alarmed—

" Intention, Mira!"

" Forgive me, my Mamma—"

" Oh Mira! could I think—"

" Call me not Mira—I'll tell you how it was, but don't look ſo concerned—or indeed I cannot—cannot ſpeak."

" Be compoſed, my child, I own you have aſtoniſhed me."

" You know, Madam, that poor Iriſh woman, (with the ſweet little boy) you bid me, when I divided the victuals, be particularly attentive to, becauſe ſhe was a ſtranger. Thoſe two laſt days ſhe did not come with the reſt for her dinner. This morning, as I walked near her cabin, ſhe was ſtanding at the door, and as ſoon as ſhe ſaw, came running to tell me, that little Sammy was very ill, and ſhe feared he would die. She cried ſo while ſhe ſpoke, that I wept as faſt as ſhe did, and told her, I would bring the victuals myſelf, ſince ſhe could not leave little Sammy to fetch it. She anſwered, he could not eat any thing now, and that ſhe did not mind herſelf: but if I would give her ſome money to pay a doctor, ſhe would for ever bleſs me; and if Sammy lived, he ſhould pray for me too. I replied, I had none then, but ſhe might get the doctor, and on Saturday I would bring her money to pay him. So,

Mamma,

Mamma, I thought I would make as much for her as poſſible; for indeed, I had rather want books than that poor little Sammy ſhould die, and his mother weep ſo: you can't think how ill he is, but I hope the doctor will cure him."

Oh Mrs. Boothby, what were my feelings, as the cherub proceeded with an earneſtneſs in her ſweet face that reached every fibre of my heart!—the large drops ſtreaming down her cheeks—I could not ſpeak.

"Won't you forgive me, Mamma? nor love me more?"

"Forgive you, my life! (bathing her neck with my tears as I ſtrained her to my boſom) I am not offended—I love, I approve of you more than ever. Why did I miſtake my darling girl!"

"And ſhall Sammy have the doctor? ſhall I carry the money now?"

"Yes—Yes, my love. But you ſhould have informed me of the matter at firſt, and all the wiſhes of your good little heart would have been anſwered, without the method you had recourſe to: that only was wrong: but you have ſweetly accounted for the error. Come, we will immediately viſit and relieve your ſuffering friends, but not at the expence of your books which were not fairly forfeited."

Away ſhe tripp'd before me to the cabin, where little Sammy was ſoon reſtored to health, and his mother to peace and gladneſs:

neſs: but Mira's French was no longer to be truſted to her humanity; another method of appropriating the fines took place, and other money was allowed for the exerciſe of her benevolence. But whither has this pleaſing recollection led me! too far to permit me to tire you with another line beyond the aſſurance of my being ever yours,

M. EGLINGTON.

LETTER IV.

Lady Eglington, in Continuation.

THE afternoons were alternately allotted to drawing, muſic, and dancing, except the firſt half hour, when Mira read in ſome approved poetic author of the times ſhe had been reading of in the morning: as thoſe cotemporary ſubjects illuſtrated each other, this method was as nearly purſued as poſſible, when her proficiency in her evening leſſons allowed her longer time for it. You will wonder at my putting poetic pieces into Mira's hand (ſo contrary to my original practice) at an age when ſhe could ſcarcely be expected to underſtand them. I did it merely to improve her ear by the melody of numbers, but by the time ſhe had more leiſure for this kind of reading, ſhe began to comprehend

comprehend its beauties, and it ſoon became a favourite one indeed.

Mira had the beſt maſters the country afforded, and for thoſe alſo had been in ſome meaſure prepared. True, ſhe had never attempted the ſtep of a minuet, but being from infancy taught to walk well, and to hold herſelf up without any artificial aids, ſhe had a natural elegance of carriage, and that charming eaſe in her manner which thoſe conſtraining methods often tend to deſtroy. I am ſenſible they muſt be uſed where children have been neglected, but a little attention from the firſt, will render them unneceſſary.

The command of her pen, and an obſervation of nature, aſſiſted her pencil; and her ear had been ſo corrected by ſtanding at my elbow as I played (for ſhe was fond of muſic) that ſhe could eaſily diſtinguiſh a falſe note whenever touched.

I have often wondered at the amazing time beſtowed in learning to dance, when Mira was ſo ſoon perfect, that her maſter declared he had nothing more to teach her but it ought to be obſerved, ſhe continued practiſing an hour or more (as ſhe happened to be inclined) the leſſons ſhe received: a cuſtom not practicable, or perhaps approved of in boarding-ſchools. Afterwards the dancing-maſter only occaſionally attended to keep her in practice, and moſt of the time gained was given to the harpſichord, which requires far greater application.

In

In diverſion and exerciſe we paſſed the hours till bed-time, which by degrees were prolonged; and thus, my deareſt friend, our pleaſing days rolled on, ſtill marked by improvement, till my lovely girl was all the fondeſt heart could wiſh.

When we had nothing left to do but to ſit down contented, enraptured, and exulting in the dear reward of all our labours; her father called her to his ſtudy, and in a ſolemn manner thanking her for her attention to all our inſtructions, and the pleaſure ſhe had given us in thoſe delightful moments, told her, he bleſt the day which heaven had given him now to ſee, when he could declare his darling daughter had in every excellence of mind, of manner, and of education adapted to her ſex, exceeded even his warmeſt expectations. "Mira, (he continued) you will now be introduced into a world in which I dare to truſt you: your perſon, your accompliſhments, will attract admiration, your virtues and underſtanding enſure love and reſpect: nor do I fear the former from the moſt trifling tongue, while corrected by the awe the latter will command. On one ſubject only 'twill be neceſſary to warn you, but a moſt important one indeed! your heart warm, good, ſuſceptible, was formed by nature for affection, confidence, and every generous paſſion. I do not fear vice, or folly undiſguiſed; but the man who wiſhes to ſucceed with you,

will, if he does not poſſeſs it, aſſume the form of virtue. Artleſs and ingenuous as you are, deception is the only enemy I have to fear, and here alone I wiſh that my experience ſtill may guide you. Oh deareſt treaſure of my heart! (claſping her to his boſom while his tears mingled with hers) let but your election fall on real worth, and though united to humble birth or fortune, all ſuch conſiderations ſhall give way to make you happy: and here I pledge my faith, that though I ſhould receive for you the firſt propoſals in the kingdom, never to liſten to one that meets not your approbation. I aſk not in return your word not to engage your hand without my knowledge or conſent; for I can have no doubts of either my Mira's love or duty. But my dear girl, my wiſhes which have your happineſs alone in view, will not be anſwered by your ſacrificing to me any attachment you may form, ſhould it too late appear you were miſtaken: 'tis much eaſier to admit, than to expel this powerful paſſion, nor, however high my opinion of your fortitude, would I have you expoſed to ſo ſevere a trial. Therefore, the favour I requeſt of you is, that on its firſt approach, you will confide in parents ſo anxious for your felicity and peace. There is nothing in the leaſt indelicate in a young lady's owning ſhe obſerves ſomething particular in a gentleman's attention, even before he declares himſelf her lover,

and

and in aſking an opinion of his merit: thus, from the knowledge of her parents ſentiments (if not congenial with her own) how will ſhe ſave herſelf and them a thouſand future pangs, by checking in time her growing partiality for an unworthy object, whom her own goodneſs of heart and inexperience, rather than want of ſenſe, may have led her to diſtinguiſh. No diſtance, no reſerve has yet eſtranged our hearts; let but the ſame confidence and tender friendſhip ſtill continue, and my Mira fulfilling the lovely promiſe of her youth, will be the joy of her parents lives, and the pride and comfort of their cloſing ſcene."

Oh Mrs. Boothby! had you but ſeen her as her father thus addreſſed her; had you but heard with what ſweet ſincerity ſhe promiſed to obey, and with what gratitude and love by turns ſhe bleſt us for our tender care, imploring us ſtill to be her guides, not in this ſtep alone, but through the way ſhe was now entering, where inexperienced as ſhe was, ſhe moſt would need our caution and advice; then, indeed, you had ſeen us " raiſing our eyes in gratitude to heaven" for the mighty bleſſings, as alternately we preſſed her to our boſom!

Were this fair method of proceeding, this mutual confidence more generally purſued, how much anxiety and miſery would it prevent? How do I ſhudder at thoſe unnatural

parents who bind their children im deteſted chains, which (ſhould the idea of their loſt happineſs ever excite repentance in their ſavage boſoms) in vain they would afterwards wiſh deſolved! and dare thoſe deluded wretches call ſuch conduct parental care and love? Though filial obedience is one of the ſweeteſt virtues under heaven; here it ſhould ſtop: even in pity to their misjudging parents, children ſhould never, by yielding to a match they hate (though that will not exculpate their own errors) render them anſwerable to heaven for the train of ills that may enſue from ſuch diſcordant union. On the other hand, fathers (though too often from mercenary motives, they abuſe their power) have an undoubted and unqualified right to reject, however diſagreeable to the parties. But even the errors of the heart ſhould here be touched with the tendereſt hand: in policy too, ſeverity ſhould, if poſſible, be avoided. for gentle treatment will ſucceed, where authority and violence fail: and, is it ſurpriſing, inexperienced youth ſhould wiſh to fly the ſtern boſom where it meets rigour alone, for one that promiſes affection and repoſe?

Would parents, by a proper education, firſt ſtrengthen their daughters minds and judgments, and then inſtead of teazing them with thoſe perpetual diſtruſts which alone are enough to induce them to fly their power to torment,

torment, but treat them with that confidence and candour which ever ſways with generous minds; few, very few would be the inſtances where the weakneſs of their choice would reflect diſhonour on themſelves, or blaſt the hopes of their parents.

I am next to give you ſome account of my Amelia, my equally dear, though leſs fortunate child, but muſt refer it to another letter. That yours may, in every reſpect, reſemble Mira, is the beſt wiſh you can receive from, deareſt Madam, your ever devoted

M. EGLINGTON.

LETTER V.

Mrs. Boothby to Lady Eglington

A Thouſand thanks, my dear Lady, for your intereſting letters. What pleaſure, what inſtruction have they yielded me? How I revere Sir Charles, and (highly as I admired you before) how has your maternal character raiſed you in my opinion! Divine Miſs Eglington! may every bleſſing crown your opening virtues as each riſing day gives forth their beauties to the world; and may no envious ſhade obſcure the proſpect ſo bright a morning promiſes!

Your tranſports. Yes—I can well con-

ceive them; and yet I fear—your hints about Amelia—But I will ſay no more 'till you explain them further: except to remind you that the perfections of one ſiſter may render the little errors of the other more conſpicuous to an eye ſo uſed to excellence, and which may not on that account eaſily endure even trifling faults; whatever they are, I make no doubt they will ſoon yield to your gentle admonition, and the example of a Mira.

What would I give to be able to adopt the whole of your charming plan: but that is impoſſible: I have not the ability, nor could I receive the leaſt aſſiſtance from Mr. Boothby, whoſe whole time is take up, if not by more important, at leaſt by more indiſpenſible concerns. Nor indeed could I, however inclined to contribute my feeble aid, eaſily catch an hour from the inceſſant round of morning viſits ſo much in faſhion here. One Lady calls—perhaps mortified to find an admittance ſhe had in the plenitude of her friendſhip for her *Dear Mrs. Boothby*, flattered herſelf would be refuſed her—and only to lighten the immenſe load of viſits ſhe muſt make that very morning, though the next may lie heavy on her hand for want of this eligible relief. Another ſucceeds—but can only ſtay one moment—ſhe has a thouſand ſhops to look over—the divineſt things are juſt come out—and ſo ſits down

down two hours (though every inſtant flying) and diſtracts me with the whole torrent of nonſenſe the town affords, which ſhe had picked up at a dozen routs the preceding evening: a ſeries of impertinent anecdotes I cannot be ſuppoſed to have the leaſt concern in, yet all burſting for vent, and diſcharging themſelves in my poor ears as faſt as her nimble tongue can roll them over, without giving me time to edge in even a dear me! or "oh la!" in return: happy at laſt if I can eſcape being dragged to ſee her wonderful taſte diſplayed in tumbling over the "divineſt things"—without (perhaps) compenſating by buying a ſingle article for the damage and loſs of time the poor trades-people ſuſtain, while ſtill ſhe talks—and talks!

You are not expoſed to this unmerciful din in the country. I know it might in ſome meaſure be avoided in town too by the convenient mode adopted of not being at home, though one ſhould, at the ſame time, be ſeen through the blinds: but there is a degree of rudeneſs in turning people in this manner from the doors, which ſhould be ſuppoſed almoſt of themſelves to open for their reception, that really ſhocks me; and which, in ſpite of example, I believe, I never ſhall be reconciled to.

No doubt, my Lady, many of thoſe mothers, we think, neglecting their daughters,

are equally againſt their inclinations, in the ſame predicament with myſelf. Fathers too are generally engaged by private buſineſs, or public concerns. Hence I fear the impracticability of extending your noble example beyond a few happy individuals, who can, like you, command their time.

Yet think me not entirely neglecting my little romp, and that becauſe I cannot accompliſh every thing, I am attempting nothing: I have been fortunate in meeting with a worthy woman as a governeſs (for I have given over all idea of a boarding-ſchool) who will not only teach her French, and direct her works and reading; but (as ſhe is well qualified to do) will pay the ſtricteſt attention to her morals and diſpoſition. She is delighted with your rules, and will exactly follow them even to natural philoſophy as far as mere reading will go; but this part of their ſtudy muſt materially ſuffer, as well from the want of accompanying experiment, as from other obvious cauſes: yet this, though imperfect, will be better than attempting nothing. You may be ſure I ſhall attend their leſſons as often as poſſible, and examine their progreſs. The beſt maſters are engaged, and Emma's impatience is quite edged by the paſſages read to her of Miſs Eglington's improvements. Something in emulation too you ſee.

But

But tell me, my friend—What! no puniſhments but cold looks and concern? Emma was ever an affectionate child, yet my looks would ſooner check the liberated bird in its career, than call her lively ſpirits to attention when all vivacity and frolic.

Then ſervants—how ſervants in one moment overſet the leſſons of a month—but is that ſurpriſing when almoſt every acquaintance, every friend—Thoſe whoſe education leave them without excuſe, are perpetually encouraging children in ſome bold trick or folly, and call it wit and ſpirit!

Go on, my amiable inſtructreſs, and teach me what to ſhun, as well as imitate. That the former ſhould, from experience, be in the leaſt within your power, gives me moſt ſenſible concern.

B. BOOTHBY.

LETTER VI.

Lady Eglington to Mrs. Boothby.

SO you are encouraging, by your example, the very practice you not only diſapprove of, but are diſguſted with! I ſhould pity you indeed were it ſo very difficult to extricate yourſelf as you ſeem to imagine: neceſſity! how ready that convenient word at every call

to ſcreen from the light judgment reflects on them, the weakneſs of our efforts, when the leaſt reſolution would inſtantly diſpel the ſhadow, and clear our way to reaſon.

Ever bleſſed be the hoſpitable doors that readily open to receive the approved friend, agreeable acquaintance, or the welcome ſtranger: but were there no other way but that you mention to prevent it, their cloſing ſhould ever ſhield me from an inundation of impertinence, hypocriſy and folly: and politeneſs itſelf yield to ſincerity and ſenſe.

Impertinence and folly I might pity, and for a while endure; but the woman who would viſit with the hope ſhe might not ſee me, and who, while ſhe enquires of my health or friends, proves the intereſt ſhe takes in the queſtion by not allowing time for an anſwer, before ſhe ſtarts off to ſome other; ſhall never deprive me of hours or even moments, I ſhould bluſh to trifle ſo wretchedly away.

Had I continued in town, I ſhould have acted in the ſame manner I did on my firſt ſettling in the country, which, though leſs liable to ſuch interruptions, would not have ſaved me altogether from the open jaws of that worſt of all devourers of time, morning viſits: but for the reſolution with which I broke at once through ſo pernicious a cuſtom.

I did not approve of teaching my ſervants falſhood and deception, by letting them ſee I could

could practice them myſelf, by thoſe denials which at beſt had been but temporary reprieves; I therefore uſed on thoſe occaſions to ſend down an apology, declaring that buſineſs of ſome conſequence prevented me the pleaſure I hoped ſoon to enjoy, and immediately after the buſineſs alluded to was over I wrote a card of invitation to the lady, adding, that if ceremony firſt required a return of the honour I had received, any evening agreeable to her (my mornings being indiſpenſably engaged) I would attend, and make in perſon my farther excuſes. Our meeting uſually brought on an explanation: if the lady was one whoſe acquaintance I wiſhed to cultivate, ſhe generally favoured me with approbation, and an intimacy beyond a morning lounge ſucceeded: if otherwiſe, I ſoon had the good fortune to diſguſt her by my odd habits, and out of the way converſation—ſo was of courſe dropped as an unworthy member of the ſociety of time killers. My cuſtom was ſoon univerſally known, and ſhortly after it would have been deemed as extraordinary a thing to think of paying Lady Eglington a morning viſit, as it would be to wear ſattin ribbon after Eaſter, or Chineſe before it.

My dear friend, what a ſtreſs you lay on my maternal character, as if there had been the leaſt difficulty, or exertion in what I did: I never deprived myſelf of a ſingle pleaſure in its whole courſe: while a girl I purſued, and delighted in the ſame ſtudies I went over

again

again with my daughter. And what was this mighty time you think ſo much about? her father gave her one hour in the morning before his own buſineſs, or amuſements (except ſometimes the chaſe, when we exchanged leſſons) could poſſibly engage him. The hour ſhe had for recreation after breakfaſt was more than ſufficient for my family directions. I was confined to her from eleven till three 'tis true, but had Mira been an hundred miles off, I ſhould have employed that portion of time in much the ſame manner, and I afterwards had an hour for dreſſing, enough in conſcience ſure.

We were ſeldom, when at home, without company, and, when ladies were of the party, I was glad of the opportunity on withdrawing from table, of accuſtoming her to read before company her evening leſſon, which being but a ſhort one, could not be ſuppoſed impertinent, or tireſome. Indeed by the time her hours were ſo exactly appropriated, ſhe read ſo finely that all would have wiſhed to liſten longer, but that her other occupations called her: and when I dined abroad, Mira read this leſſon as I dreſſed, and had the longer play time for it in the evening,

Thus you ſee, Mrs. Boothby, I neither ſacrificed my pleaſure, nor the ſociety of my friends, for ſhe had an attendant (on whom I could depend) to take care of her, when I left her, and who accompanied her in her walks when I was otherwiſe engaged.

But

But were there really inconveniencies attending; heavens! ſhall the very people who daily reſign, to forms and cuſtoms they deſpiſe, their feelings and inclinations, refuſe to ſuch an object as their child's temporal (perhaps eternal) good, ſome ſacrifice if requiſite? want of time indeed! ridiculous and wicked!

In ſhort, the only excuſe that can obtain for parents hazarding their children to the precarious care of ſtrangers, is when they fairly own by doing ſo, they give them at leaſt a chance of eſcaping the contagion of vices, their own wretched habits would render them liable to an imitation of: to ſuch I have nothing to ſay—but would all who might with ſafety do ſo, attend themſelves as much as poſſible to the loved objects they would ſacrifice their lives for; (though ſtrange infatuation! they neglect them in this far more material point) the good effects of ſuch a line of conduct would ſoon appear in a reform of manners, and the virtues Heaven implanted in the infant mind aſſiſted in their growth, and ſpread by cultivation (and what hand ſo tender, ſo intereſted as a parent's?) would bleſs the riſing generation.

As to your objection of want of ability, believe me, there is no ſuch wonderful ability requiſite. Trouble and confinement are the real motives: fancied trouble and apprehended confinement: but were a mother ever ſo deficient herſelf, ſhe might, as you have

have done (though you can plead no ſuch excuſe) ſubſtitute a governeſs ſtill under her own eye.

Again you mention emulation: whatever its advantages, I had rather forego them all, than riſk ſowing the ſmalleſt ſeed of envy (which might after ſpread to moſt malignant growth) in a boſom I would never wiſh to feel, or underſtand its influence. Nor might the example of the beſt avail, while the worſt are equally liable to imitation.

One further objection againſt parting with a daughter (and a material one to me) I muſt add, is the danger of eſtranging, by abſence, her affection from her mother: perhaps in this I am ſingular, for I remember among other reaſons for nurſing my babes myſelf, I could not bear to think if I did not, they might be more attached to others than to me. Nor could I ſupport the idea of reſigning, in the ſlighteſt degree, that dear affection my fond heart deſired ſo intirely to poſſeſs. This apprehenſion ſenſibly affected me when my Amelia left me: nor do I think her affection for me now ſo tender, ſo much alive as that of her ſiſter who never quitted my boſom.

You ſay, you may in vain regard your daughter with indifference or concern, and wonder at my never having had occaſion to inflict ſeverer puniſhments; did you but know my friend, the pains I took from the firſt to render ſuch unneceſſary, you would no long-

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er be ſurpriſed. Remember the ſtreſs I ever lay on firſt impreſſions, and the neceſſity of immediately turning from its firſt bias the leaſt tendency to improper habits. I would no more undertake to regulate a child of ten, or even ſeven years, than to manage a young horſe that had never before felt the rein: how eaſy to train the colt to its paces, but when too long ſuffered to gallop at liberty, how difficult to conquer its obſtinate will! Nay, life itſelf often falls a ſacrifice to its ſtubborneſs; and, like thoſe, how many children, after years of miſtaken indulgence at home, are expoſed at public ſchools to a ſudden change, which if it does not terminate in death, but cows and breaks that ſpirit, which, if properly directed, had been the ſpring of every noble action!

Since you have led me to this ſubject, I muſt declare my abhorrence of every mode of violent puniſhment, whipping or ſtriking I look upon as the worſt, nor can they anſwer one good purpoſe, while productive of a thouſand ills. Heavens! while children (eſpecially boys) ſhould be taught to riſe ſuperior to a ſenſe of pain, to wiſh them to dread a whipping! To debaſe that free-born ſpirit, that ſhould early learn the equal rights of man, by blows, which in a few years he will be deemed an abject coward if he yields to! And which, while he cringes to the hand that ſtrikes, will but ſhew him how to tyrannize,

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You ſay, you may in vain regard your daughter with indifference or concern, and wonder at my never having had occaſion to inflict ſeverer puniſhments; did you but know my friend, the pains I took from the firſt to render ſuch unneceſſary, you would no long-

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er be ſurpriſed. Remember the ſtreſs I ever lay on firſt impreſſions, and the neceſſity of immediately turning from its firſt bias the leaſt tendency to improper habits. I would no more undertake to regulate a child of ten, or even ſeven years, than to manage a young horſe that had never before felt the rein: how eaſy to train the colt to its paces, but when too long ſuffered to gallop at liberty, how difficult to conquer its obſtinate will! Nay, life itſelf often falls a ſacrifice to its ſtubborneſs; and, like thoſe, how many children, after years of miſtaken indulgence at home, are expoſed at public ſchools to a ſudden change, which if it does not terminate in death, but cows and breaks that ſpirit, which, if properly directed, had been the ſpring of every noble action!

Since you have led me to this ſubject, I muſt declare my abhorrence of every mode of violent puniſhment, whipping or ſtriking I look upon as the worſt, nor can they anſwer one good purpoſe, while productive of a thouſand ills. Heavens! while children (eſpecially boys) ſhould be taught to riſe ſuperior to a ſenſe of pain, to wiſh them to dread a whipping! To debaſe that free-born ſpirit, that ſhould early learn the equal rights of man, by blows, which in a few years he will be deemed an abject coward if he yields to! And which, while he cringes to the hand that ſtrikes, will but ſhew him how to tyrannize,

tyrannize, in turn, over thoſe whoſe real independence inſtead of honouring, a falſe and caſual power may make him dare to queſtion! If ſhame is the object in view, render him not callous to it by inuring him to blows, or words of paſſion, and indecent language he ſhould never hear; they will but produce that mechanical fear which operates only in a deteſted preſence. Waken the natural feelings of his heart, and then loving virtue, and deteſting vice for their own ſakes: he will be as ſafe abroad, as within the circle of your magic rod.

I ſhould not expect a cool look would have the leaſt effect on a child who had not been accuſtomed to prize my good opinion beyond every other conſideration: but you muſt not be capricious, and, by playing with your frowns and ſmiles loſe the effect, and rather divert than puniſh or reward. All, all is cuſtom, and if gentle methods judiciouſly applied avail not, the ſeverer will at length be diſregarded too: and in vain may we hope ſucceſs though we proceed even to the laſt degree of torture in the abject ſcale of puniſhments.

As I never had a ſon, I did not much turn my thoughts to the proper methods of treating boys, which muſt be more difficult than that of girls, from the neceſſity of keeping alive, and unſubdued. a bold freedom and activity of ſpirit, while you check impetu-

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oſity, and ſoften their hearts to humanity and affection: not that I would have women brought up as mere paſſive machines, or encourage a weak pliancy of temper that may render them liable to impoſition, or to be taken advantage of by inferior underſtandings only, becauſe united to greater fortitude and reſolution; but the effects of reſtraining the ardour of their minds are not in general ſo material. This difficulty I once experienced; and, perhaps, a relation of the incident may better elucidate my meaning.

A friend being obliged to leave her houſe a few days on particular buſineſs, while her ſon (a boy about fourteen) was at home on a vacation, begged me to take charge of him during her abſence: as the young gentleman had the character of being rather headſtrong, and what was infinitely worſe, of a cruel vindictive diſpoſition: I trembled at the idea of introducing him to Mira's acquaintance; for the beſt children are in danger from vicious example. Though where her good was concerned, I ſeldom ſacrificed to ceremony; I could not refuſe the requeſt, but determined to keep them from playing together as much as poſſible, and to watch them cloſely where it could not well be avoided.

One day, on entering the garden, I perceived young maſter, with his ſervant attending: by his attitude, and the action of his

his right hand, the little imp ſeemed threatning to wring of the head off a bird which he held in the other. The man, after in vain endeavouring to diſſuade him, attempted to take it away by force, while he aſked him, how he ſhould like that his father, or ſome ſtrong or powerful man ſhould ſerve him ſo? Thus injudiciouſly inculcating the pernicious leſſon, that ſuperior ſtrength, or power, might tyrannize over weaker, even to the attack of right or life.

"You ſhan't take it from me (ſaid the boy, as I approached) 'tis mine, and I'll do what I pleaſe with it."

Certainly (obſerved I) if 'tis your's, the King can't deprive you of it: and (turning to the ſervant) as to another ſerving him as he threatens to ſerve the bird, the beſt dare not attempt it; for 'twould militate equally againſt the laws of religion and of the ſtate: and though ſuch were wicked enough to violate the firſt, the latter would puniſh the offence. But the bird is maſter Edward's, and he may kill it when he will: there are no laws againſt it, or human or divine.

But, Madam, you ſaid, the King could not take it:—I have read of Kings having not only deprived their ſubjects of their property, but even of their lives.

That's only where thoſe ſubjects, by firſt degenerating from the noble independent principles they derived from Heaven (and its peculiar

peculiar gift to man) into a ſet of abject ſlaves, prepared their own necks for the wretched yoke of their inſolent maſters; and what matter if the deprivation of life follows that of liberty, its greateſt bleſſing?

But how did they prepare them? and why do they ſubmit to wear what they muſt ſo diſlike?

When once their paſſions and vices had weakened their minds, the reſt was eaſily conquered: and if they had not fortitude to reſiſt their own evil inclinations, where ſhall they find ſtrength to ſhake off the hand of oppreſſion? not till ſome great impulſe of reviving virtue inſpires the effort, but this ſeldom happens, for they ſoon are ſo loſt, as to be content, nay, even happy in their ſituation; and this is the laſt ſtate of corruption.

What a bleſſing is liberty, my Lady! Thank Heaven I am an Engliſhman! I would not loſe my liberty for the world (ſaid the urchin).

Ah! Edward! (ſhaking my head, as I looked with compaſſion on the bird he kept ſwinging by the leg).—It muſt, indeed, be a terrible thing! witneſs that little wretch who did not bring on its own ſufferings, and deſerves them not. Poor little priſoner!

Better kill it, Madam—I'll wring its neck off: Shall I?

As you like: 'twere mercy to keeping it thus in torture.—Stop one moment—allow me to look at it firſt—give it to my hand.

You

You want to let it fly!

How! when 'tis your's! when you intruſt it to me! Dear little creature (taking it) how it flutters! how its heart beats, with fear and apprehenſion! it thinks me its enemy too—be quiet little fool: I would not hurt you for the world! Why ſhould I? The little innocent never harmed me; and though Heaven ſubjected all thoſe animals to man, it meant them for their uſe and pleaſure, not for their cruel tyranny and malice. In fact, what real right can I pretend to (beyond what reaſon juſtifies) over a life Heaven gave as perfect as my own? Admit I had, a generous mind would never abuſe its power, or what would that reaſon avail which diſtinguiſhes me from the brute, if exerciſed to injure, not to bleſs?

"Why then, Madam, do people fiſh, hunt, and ſhoot?"

"For food, for exerciſe, for ſport. I do not approve thoſe practices as amuſements; but what ſhall we think of the mere butcher, who without ſuch inducement ſhall delight to torture, and take pleaſure in the act of murdering, for murdering ſake!

He bluſhed—he hung down his head.—I proceeded,

"How beautiful this plumage! it now receives thoſe thouſand vivid dies from that animation, which, in a few moments will ceaſe for ever; and, when robbed of life, how

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ſoon they will fade away at the feet of him, who, with all his mighty, all his boaſted power, cannot call back one glowing colour, or reſtore a being a God alone could give!" Compaſſion ſoftened his features—he looked at the bird—his eyes filled —"Here Edward —but let me before you deſtroy."

"Who I! I won't deſtroy it—I will not hurt it—I am no butcher—No indeed"—(and his boſom heaved with ſhame, pity, and remorſe).

"Won't you?" I am glad to hear it. See —it lays quieter: one would almoſt believe it underſtood you, and was eaſier. Hark! it chirps! O Edward—perhaps it means to thank you!

It owes me nothing:—'tis becauſe you handle it ſo gentle. How good you are!

Who knows, my love, but this is the very bird that entertained us this morning ſo ſweetly with a ſong? Ah! had you cloſed the pipe that warbled the note of praiſe to its Creator, and with ingratitude repaid."

"Oh! my Lady—I cannot bear to think of it—what could poſſeſs me?"

He looked at me, at the bird, by turns—bent over my hand—kiſſed it, and tenderly ſtroked the very thing he wiſhed a moment before to deſtroy. The incruſtation that hardened over his heart removed, the gentle ſprings of nature ſtreamed through his boſom, and revived all his feelings. Obſerving it peck my hand, he flew to get it food.

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" It will not eat—I fear I hurt it, it droops —'tis ſick, 'twill die!"

" Ah! Edward! can you not gueſs what ails it? You who juſt now exclaimed—I would not loſe my liberty for the world!"

" But how can a bird be ſenſible of freedom?"

" No! was it not happy till you enſlaved it? Did it not range through the wide fields of air at will? Did it not aſſociate with its fellows? Eat, drink, and ſleep, or ſing at pleaſure? Baſk in the ſun, or ſeek the ſhade as inclination led? And do you doubt but it enjoyed its freedom?"

" Let it fly, Madam," (his looks all animation) " let it fly—But no: give it me—'twas I deprived it of its liberty, let me reſtore it too."

" 'Tis being doubly juſt. Take it my noble boy." He toſſed it up in the air—the bird took a circle; then perched on a branch near us—clapped its wings—ſwelled out a note of rapture, then ſoared above, and was out of ſight in an inſtant. Edward, with an eye of fire, followed its motion, and on its laſt flight, toſſing up his hat, exclaimed—" Huzza for liberty!" Now, my charming fellow, ſaid I, you indeed comprehend the true meaning of that glorious word. Liberty is not (as too generally underſtood) an unbounded licence to do (whether right or wrong) whatever we

deſire, or a wild impulſe purſuing it knows not what: a love of liberty is a divine emanation ſpringing from benevolence alone, which expanding like the dews of Heaven, over all creation, gives us an intereſt in that univerſal happineſs which alone depends on, and can only be preſerved by the free exerciſe of thoſe privileges inherent in nature, and ever aſſerted by virtue. The deſpotic tyrant is as much a ſlave as the wretch he tramples beneath his feet—for can he enjoy what he deſtroys? or can his ſelfiſh contracted ſoul even comprehend what muſt have the moſt enlarged liberality for its baſis? No; what wonder then you kept the bird a priſoner while you yourſelf were a ſlave to the loweſt of paſſions! But no ſooner did a little reflection allow your heart to warm to its native humanity, than generoſity and juſtice equally prompted you to impart the bleſſings you yourſelf enjoyed."—How have I digreſſed? To return.

In anſwer to your complaints of ſervants, I will only obſerve that 'tis ſtrange—very ſtrange, while you are ſo careful to whom you intruſt your plate and jewels, you ſhould not be at leaſt equally cautious when thoſe far dearer treaſures are at ſtake! Though mine are all good people, and regarded as friends and children of the family; Mira (though polite and benevolent to all) never aſſociated with any but her own attendant: one

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in whom you may be aſſured I could particularly confide.

As to viſitants, my children were never exhibited at the deſert, or tea-table; and Mira was ſeldom long in company 'till too big for a play-thing. When ſhe began to diſtinguiſh where faults or merits were conſpicuous, my obſervation led the way.

LETTER VII.

Lady Eglington in Continuation.

I AM now to give you ſome account of my Amelia, whoſe faults you ſeem to think I regard with too ſcrutinous an eye. "Little errors! trifling faults!" Ah! my friend—Believe me I had rather ſee ſuch greater as might give way to time and reflection, than thoſe perpetual ſhoots of folly which choaking up every paſſage to the heart, will, I fear, deaden it beyond recall. Had I but known in time the conſequences that were to enſue, I would have ſnatched her back in ſpite of every conſideration of ſuperior fortune: but I was fatally lulled 'till too late.

Whenever I viſited her at ſchool (which from various cauſes was ſeldomer than I wiſhed) inſtead of an opportunity of examining her apart, a diſplay of her accompliſh-

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ments, and of ſuch others as moſt excelled, took place. Her muſic, dancing, drawing, and many pretty works I had reaſon to admire: yet I wiſhed, on ſome of the vacations, to have her home to be further ſatisfied. This my infatuated ſiſter, from her averſion to the country, ſtill oppoſed.—"Indulgence at home would ſpoil her for a public ſchool; ſhe would contract more aukward habits in one month than could be conquered in twelve."

At length, about ten months ago, ſhe wrote me her Amelia had now finiſhed her education, and was the moſt beautiful, and moſt elegant, and moſt accompliſhed young lady in England. In ſhort, all that was wanting to make her all perfection, was that ſuperior poliſh high-life only could give: and which her introduction into the polite world would in the courſe of the approaching winter accompliſh. After this, ſhe added, they would pay us a viſit, and ſhe would ſurpriſe, would aſtoniſh me with a ſight of the angel—but I was not to expect ſhe would leave her with me: no, no: ſuch a creature was not for the country, where, buried in romantic ſhades, ſhe might ſoon turn ſhepherdeſs, and perhaps falling in love (as 'twas called) run away with one of her father's piping ſwains, inſtead of a choice through half the titles in the kingdom.

This alarmed me—I wrote to entreat her not to think of precipitating the child on this ſubject: and painted in the ſtrongeſt colours my apprehenſions on her being expoſed at ſuch an age to the alluring dangers of that *high-life*, which called for all her affection and maternal care to guard her infant charge from; but was laughed at as uſual in return for my romantic notions, and aſked, if I imagined courts inchanted caſtles? and peers devouring dragons? I wrote alſo to my dear girl, declaring now ſhe had not her former excuſes of buſineſs to prevent her, I hoped to be made happy by her frequent letters: and alſo wiſhed ſhe would favour her ſiſter (who was fond of writing) with a deſcription of thoſe ſcenes and her ideas of them; now firſt preſented to her view. A line or two, with an apology for her not writing more, her numerous engagements not allowing time, was all we could obtain, and even that ſeldom indeed!

I was now ardently longing for the ſummer that was to reſtore me my child—It came—the birth-day paſſed—other trifling delays ſucceeded, and quite exhauſted my patience: the day was at laſt fixed—but inſtead of bringing the happineſs in view, it plunged me into the deepeſt affliction by an event I little expected. My poor loved ſiſter, whoſe only faults were too gay a turn, and an immoderate fondneſs for pleaſure, neglecting a cold,

cold, her diſlike of confinement would not allow her time to recover from, was haſtily ſnatched away by a fever, ere I could fly to receive her laſt farewell!

Ah! dear Amelia! may eternal ſcenes of real bliſs ſucceed the fleeting ſhadows that paſſed ſo ſoon away, nor left a trace behind to mark that they once had been!

By her will my daughter Amelia was left ſole heireſs of her fortune, and her father appointed her guardian till ſhe became of age, or married: but Lady Blomer, not adverting to the conſequences that may enſue from the omiſſion, has left him no authority to controul or reſtrain her choice. Sure ſuch a father—yet it was want of reflection alone. Alas! it may intirely ſubvert that happineſs ſhe wiſhed her beloved niece ſhould enjoy.

Not even the ſudden ſhock we had received, nor the diſtreſs it occaſioned, could prevent our inſtantly ſending for Amelia, who (now without a guardian in London) we wondered did not immediately follow the expreſs. Suppoſing her extreme grief had prevented even her intimation of ſuch a deſign, it was not with a little aſtoniſhment we learned the difficulty found in prevailing on her to leave Lady Priſcilla Blomer (of whom ſhe is immoderately fond) a very gay young lady, lately married to a relation of the late Lord Blomer. However, ſhe at laſt arrived: but not till all the ceremony of mourning had

been firſt adjuſted: a thing our diſtreſs had not yet allowed us time to think of.

The moment ſhe appeared (beautiful indeed!) inſtead of flying to our open arms, ſhe dropped a deep courteſy at the door, then (while our tears of ſorrow were converted into thoſe of tranſport at the ſight of her) advanced, and with a formal ſalute, and tearleſs eye, paid her compliments of condolence.

Joy at once more beholding my long abſent child, grief for the loſt ſiſter, whoſe affection for this her adored relation her preſence brought in full remembrance to my mind; and the damp her coldneſs now ſtruck upon my heart, overpowered me, and I inſtantly fainted. On my recovery, Mira, in an agony of diſtreſs, was attempting to ſooth and relieve me, while her ſiſter (wondering ſhe did not recollect it ſooner) recommended her ſmelling bottle to my Ladyſhip, as particularly ſovereign in ſuch caſes. "Really it had brought her from death a few nights ago at a route, where the amazing crowd, and intenſe heat of the room, had quite killed her."

When I was a little more compoſed, Mira again turning to the ſiſter ſhe had ſo long wiſhed to embrace, addreſſed her in the warmeſt terms of affection, pathetically mentioning the circumſtance of their being twins, as a tie that would draw their hearts ſtill nearer to each other.

"Really (replied Amelia) I greatly admire you too—I had no idea of any thing

half

half ſo elegant; you are the very picture of the Ducheſs of —— who is almoſt the fineſt woman in the world. Why did you not ſend me orders: I would have choſen you the prettieſt mourning—my own is moſt charmingly fancied. But if you pleaſe I will write to Lady Priſcilla, whoſe taſte is inimitable! I know ſhe will exert it at my deſire, which you will not do her juſtice if you do not think a very great favour indeed! for ſhe can't endure to have her ſtyle made common: but fortunately I have vaſt intereſt with her."

Mira thanked her, but thought there was time enough.

"Oh dear no! there will be no appearing before you know: and you don't intend ſtifling yourſelf any longer in your own room I hope? It is time to go abroad."

"Your ſiſter, my love, is too much affected at the loſs of her aunt to wiſh it, yet I ſhould not be ſurpriſed if ſhe were leſs ſo than you, who were ſo much more with your kind departed relation, and of whom ſhe was ſo particularly fond. You have had a great loſs Amelia."

"Oh yes, Madam!—you can't imagine how I feel it—juſt as I came out—and began to be acquainted with life—and enjoyed it ſo!—unfortunate!—for Lady Blomer ſaw a world of company—but I have a thouſand friends who do the ſame, and who knowing

my preſent ſituation, wiſh to have me with them. I was very loth to leave town—indeed nothing but the pleaſure of paying my reſpects to you could have induced me, for I deteſt the country." "You have not tried it yet, my ſiſter: the country, though not in the full bloom it was when we firſt expected you, is ſtill delightful."

"'Tis enough for me it is not London.—Heavens! that ſuch a woman as you ſhould be thus unmercifully buried! and ſtranger ſtill, that it does not break your heart! What a waſte of charms! Why the moment you appeared in the drawing-room you'd ſet it in a blaze!"

Mrs. Boothby—by this time the whole melancholy truth flaſhed out on me. Oh, why did I ſuffer—but what avails complaining now?—Say, ſhall I ever, ever forgive myſelf? The lovely ruin! like the beautiful ſhell of a new-raiſed edifice when a devouring fire had deſtroyed all within, and changed each bright compartment into rubbiſh!

Her poor father (ſorrow and diſappointment clouding his brow) unable to ſupport the ſcene longer, left the room: nor was I ſorry he retired, leſt ſome word of diſapprobation or rebuke ſhould eſcape him (for he evidently ſat uneaſy) on the very moment of her arrival, that moment we had ſo impatiently looked to, as that which was to perfect our domeſtic felicity.

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On the firſt opportunity, I intreated Sir Charles to have patience with her foibles, which, as they were more owing to neglect, and imbibed prejudices than innate diſpoſition, I hoped, would by gentle methods wear away. He promiſed to govern his temper, however diſguſted, but too juſtly obſerved, that though acquired follies might be diſperſed by opening judgment and reflection; where there was ſuch inſenſibility, ſuch unnatural hardineſs, as he termed it, there could be little hope of reformation till the feelings were rouſed by keen misfortune and experience. What an alteration! when ſhe was torn from me, ſhe was all tenderneſs, ſweetneſs, and love!

This my more than diſappointment, added to my other afflictions, affected my health, and confined me ſome time to my room: your arrival was the firſt ray of joy that reached my melancholy boſom: your call on me for my experience and advice, affected, and rouſed me from my lethargy. Warm as my feelings then were on the ſubject, your daughter's education made an intereſt in my heart, that induced me to give you this little ſketch, and happy ſhall I be if it proves in the leaſt ſerviceable to the dear child of the friend I love.

The effects of education in thoſe ſiſters hitherto are obvious, what the future may prove heaven only knows! my heart is ill

at eaſe—yet I will not deſpond!—'Twere impious—ingratitude—The power that has ever ſo ſupremely favoured, will ſtill continue to bleſs me. I will do all I can to awaken the affection which I hope is only dormant, not extinguiſhed in the breaſt of my darling girl, and then will point to the lovely wanderer the paths of virtue, peace, and happineſs. Nor ſhall any indulgence be denied her, that can with propriety be granted: hitherto we have ſeen a few particular friends only:—Amelia complains of gloom, of ſolitude, and of the country—ſhe pines for Lady Priſcilla, and declares ſhe ſhall never be happy till permitted to go to town. For her ſake we will admit company and feſtivity ſooner than we ſhould be otherwiſe inclined to do. We have an agreeable neighbourhood, and the country at this time abounds with amuſements: we will diverſify the ſcenes and render them as charming as poſſible. May ſhe enjoy them and be happy, as the fondeſt parents wiſh her.

When may we hope the promiſed viſit? You can now leave your Emma in excellent care, ſhould you not chuſe to bring her with you. Are you as gay, as lively as ever? You are—Do come—and help me to manage this dear mad girl: perhaps your raillery may have ſome effect. At all events haſten to the arms of your

M. EGLINGTON.

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LETTER VIII.

Miſs A. Eglington to Lady Priſcilla Blomer.

HEAVENS Priſcilla! have you really a deſign on my life? or do you think it but a piece of cruel kindneſs, ſince I am buried alive, to end my torments as ſoon as poſſible, that you thus kill me by your horrid ſilence, though I have written a thouſand times ſince my wretched abode in this dreary manſion?

Yet write I will—for what elſe have I to do? Oh Time, Time! how fleet thy paſſage on the wing of pleaſure, while in vain, I checked thy rapid flight! and now I hate thy ſtupid, languid hours, how heavy trail thy tardy, leaden feet!

Yes, the dull ſcene continues, though with a little ſenſeleſs variation. Thank God, the old ladies no longer come to my mother's room, and inſtead of diſſipating her grief by amuſing, ſet up their pipes in chorus—ſo make her ten times worſe. She is much better ſince they tired, and changed the humdrum tune: ſhe now comes down, and this morning walked in the garden about thoſe *charming ſhades*, where ſhe and Mira examined their favourite flowers with as much attention and pleaſure, as though they were birth-night dreſſes. My Lady aſked me, if art could imitate ſuch colours? and whether

the morning air was not delightful? For me —I never admired flowers but in an embroidered button-hole; nor air, except when wafted after dancing by my partner's gallant hand.

Yet my ſiſter ſeems quite happy—her content in ſuch a ſituation is ſo ſtrange a circumſtance to me, I ſhould think it all hypocriſy, but that I impute it all together to her ignorance of life. Then ſhe is the moſt ſincere creature—every ſentiment betrays itſelf in her beaming features as it riſes. I have already informed you what a beauty ſhe is; now ſhe begins to leave off the doleful, I aſſure you, ſhe is quite divine: but 'twonld divert you to ſee how ſhe bluſhes when I tell her ſo, which often happens, for I want to ſpirit her up to join me in inſiſting on a trip to town: would ſhe but ſecond me, I think we might ſucceed.

What eyes ſhe has, now ſhe does not ſpoil them with eternal weeping! yet ſcarce an hour paſſes but ſome nonſenſe or other calls out a tear. They ſtreamed this very morning (while a boy ſhe bribed to do ſo, was replacing a bird's neſt he had ſtolen) at the idea of the mother's rapture, who kept hovering over us all the time, on the recovery of her young. Heavens, how I laughed! I wiſh ſhe knew better what to do with her eyes: they are really loſt on her, for ſhe makes no more uſe of them than if deſigned merely for

for ſeeing with. "What ſhould ſhe exerciſe them on Amelia?" True, Priſcilla—I did not think of that. This dull country air is infectious, I am grown quite ſtupid—yet I wiſh they could be called into action by proper game, for it would be a ſin to waſte ſuch ammunition on the tame animals thoſe rough wilds abound with.

You will be ſurpriſed at my praiſing a woman ſo—that woman a ſiſter too. My aunt, when I happened to admire the toniſh beauties (I could not help it when it was the ton) uſed to ſay, "Amelia is too handſome to be envious:" I am glad of it, for many fine faces are quite disfigured by its effects in ſpite of diſſimulation. Beſides this reaſon, Priſcilla, I have felt ſuch pleaſure from raiſing envy in others, that I ever determined none ſhould enjoy an equal triumph over me.

Sure there is admiration enough in the world for all the fine women in it, while we ſee the plaineſt (ſome how or other) getting a ſhare. True, I have never had too much of this delightful incenſe, that could not well be: but as much as could be offered was mine, and that I had received (while men are ſo well bred) with but half my pretenſions. But really Mira is ſuch an innocent beauty (am I too ſatirical Priſcilla?) and looks ſo unconſcious of her powers to create envy, that ſhe would kill it in any boſom e'er it could well ariſe.

I could

I could almoſt love this girl, but for her ſtrange ways! Will you gueſs what ſhe is about at this very moment? an hundred years would not give you the ſlighteſt idea—Why, becauſe it is a bright ſunſhine day, ſhe is fixing in her cloſet window a kind of magic lanthorn; (like the raree-ſhew they divert children with in London) here ſhe is to magnify inſects, weeds, and ſuch ſtuff, and I am promiſed wonderful entertainment from this ſurpriſing ſight.

The walls of this cloſet are covered with book-caſes, and maps of her own work and painting. I wonder her eyes are ſo brilliant—mine had loſt half their luſtre had they pored over the thouſandth part as much, I aſſure you though her works and drawings excel mine, or any we ſaw at ſchool.

In glancing over the books, I could ſee none of thoſe I uſed to get from the circulating libraries, except Clariſſa, Tom Jones, Cecilia, and a few others I do not much like. I never approve of buying books, for they come in, and go out—juſt like feathers you know. There are globes too, and fifty comical looking things. I learned geography myſelf: my father examined me, but looked as if he thought I might as well have let it alone. I think ſo too—nonſenſe! What is it good for? 'tis well enough to paint over a map to be framed for ſhow; but what care I about Grand Cairo? Or what is it to me what

what latitude it is in? Beſides, Priſcilla, I know men hate learned women, and hinted it to Mira (for one would not wiſh one's ſiſter ridiculous for one's own ſake) ſhe ſmiled at my idea of a woman's being learned, who was not entirely ignorant, and ſaid, ſhe would be apt to ſuſpect the underſtandings of the men I alluded to. How miſtaken! for they were all very pretty fellows: ſhe will not take warning though.

The only thing worth attention in this wonderful cloſet (Sir Charles and my Lady notwithſtanding ſo much admire) is a piano forte: there are ſome fine inſtruments in the muſic room, but here my ſiſter uſually practices. I am fond of muſic, and am thought to excel—in ſinging particularly—I fancy (if they have any taſte) I ſhall ſurpriſe them there. I obſerve ſome celebrated Italian airs, which no doubt Mira attempts but what is ſinging without expreſſion, and who can reach to that, that never ſaw an opera?

Good God! I am fatigued to death! Who could have believed I ſhould have written ſo much in all my life together? Yet, what elſe can I do to kill time, and keep me from ſtagnation? Do, dear creature, let me know a little of the world, leſt I forget it. Forget it! ah, no!

Forgive my ſtupidity—you ſee I have no ſubject: my next may be more entertaining, for they talk of reſuming their old way of life

(old

(old way I believe) yet it cannot be worſe than this. A poor conſolation, while memory revolves the charming ſcenes—Priſcilla—if you have compaſſion, let me live them over in your letters, though I die with envy while I read.

Tell me too how you go on with your—What ſhall I call him? Are your ſalts ready? "No"—then I will not add huſband—folly! to marry a Commoner—now had you taken my adviſe, your-*Lord* had not ſounded quite ſo horrid. Your *Charles* then, as he calls himſelf, when he is moſt inclined to make himſelf a fool—worſe and worſe—well your tormentor then.—Aye, that's juſt the very thing, you ſay—Is he as fond, as ſurfeiting, as ridiculous as ever? (my compliments)—Ah Priſcilla! you have your troubles too! but you are in London and can ſhake them off. Heavens, how my wriſt achs! Adieu, and pity your poor—

AMELIA.

LETTER IX.

Lady Priſcilla Blomer to Miſs A. Eglington.

"POOR Amelia!"—and poor Priſcilla—let her echo!

Your letter found me in the horrors, and made me ten times worſe. How can you diſtract

diſtract me with your ſiſter, and raree-ſhows, and maps, and your mother's flowers? Pity your grand mother's not alive, that you might entertain me with ſome of her fuſty old prayers too—but write on ſince it relieves you, and I'll promiſe to read your letters when Blomer puts me in a humour fit for nothing elſe.

" Surfeiting." I'm ſick—I'm dying! Amelia—liſten to me if you are wiſe—as you hope for happineſs in this world; never, never marry a man who loves you.

Shake off my troubles? I might as ſoon ſhake of my ſhadow while he follows me about like a troubled ſpirit—you ſhall hear: the other evening, perceiving me dreſt for a ball, he began in his uſual ſtrain of heroics.

" Going abroad, my Lady?"

Is there any thing ſo uncommon in that Sir, that you ſtare ſo?

Ah!—(the ah -- as long as his woeful face) No, no! but why will my Priſcilla perpetually throw away, on inſenſible crowds, thoſe moments that would make me, who ſo prize them, the happieſt of men?

Really, Mr. Blomer, for which you intend your elegant compliment, the world, yourſelf, or me, I cannot divine; but I deſire you would at leaſt be as polite as thoſe *inſenſible crowds*, and allow me equal liberty of amuſing myſelf as I think proper. Did I ever wiſh, Madam, to deprive you of a ſingle pleaſure?

ſure? I only lament your want af affection does not put it in my power to render your domeſtic felicity as great as your public enjoyments.

Oh, did you love me as I once hoped—Good God, Sir! (I was ready to faint Amelia) did I ever tell you I loved you?

No; but as you conſented to be mine, I flattered myſelf—

And am I accountable for your ſtrange miſtake? How can you torment me ſo? Domeſtic felicity! love—I never heard ſuch ſtuff: it makes me ſick—quite ſick, Mr. Blomer. (And I ſat down and fanned myſelf).

Dear creature, why this agitation? Can you think me like the common herd of huſbands, whoſe indifference ſo many of your ſex deplore? Believe me, my Priſcilla, it is not your killing diſregard alone that affects me; but anxiety leſt your health, (dear as my ſoul) ſhould ſuffer—your preſent ſituation—

Was there ever ſuch a wretch!

Lord, Mr. Blomer, how provoking! ſure my preſent ſituation is mortifying enough, without your trying to make it worſe. As to the "common herd of huſbands," aſcribe no merit to yourſelf for differing from them, for from my very ſoul I wiſh I could exchange for their indifference, your fatiguing, diſguſting nonſenſe.

Oh! Priſcilla! and is your heart indeed ſo hardened againſt me as to be capable of forming

ing ſuch a wiſh!" (and the idiot was obliged to take out his handkerchief) ſo you may be ſure I had enough of it, and was about to fly—but catching my hand, he begged at leaſt to be permitted to attend, and gaze with others on thoſe charms he alone could feel as they deſerved.

Declaring, I cared not where he went, ſo he teazed me not with his eternal attention, nor made me the laugh of the company. I eſcaped—but it was not long ere he followed.

The impertinent behaviour I had juſt experienced, had ſo fatigued my ſpirits, that the dazzling of the lights, and a long ſucceſſion of unmeaning minuets, with the horrid ſcent of maréchale powder from my own and every head in company, (beſides a thouſand different puffs from handkerchiefs and gloves) made me ſo dreadfully ſick; I was obliged to ſit the ſecond dance: this had no effect, for the heat of the room (by that time intenſe) and the fooliſh flitting objects continually whirling before my eyes, compleatly turned my brain. Apprehending I ſhould faint, and fearing Blomer would make a fuſs and expoſe me, I attempted getting out without obſervation: however, he did ſee me (tho' I thought him engaged at the other end of the room) and ſuſpecting I was ill, followed, and caught me in his arms as I was ſinking probably down a long flight of ſtairs juſt at my feet. He was terribly alarmed, and *inſiſted* (I aſſure you)

on

on my immediately going home. I was too ill to reſiſt, or even to prevent his putting me into the coach himſelf (tho' my partner attended) and ſupporting me all the way.

Think how provoking, to be obliged to leave ſuch delightful ſcenes (ſweetly dreſſed as I was) for a home, a huſband, and phyſicans—for Blomer inſtantly ſent for a dozen, and worſe, ſat by me all the night watching me like a child.

To mend the matter, next day he wanted to prevent me, when almoſt well, from riſing to dreſs for a route: you may judge how ſurprized I was—but even this was exceeded, for finding I paid him no attention, he had the preſumption to ſend for my mother, to diſſuade me from doing what I liked! ſo amongſt them they ſet my head ſwimming again, and I was glad to get back to bed. Here they kept me ill ſeveral days, which was the cauſe of my not anſwering your doleful letters ſooner.

Surely you are now paid in kind, dreadfully as you have been ſituated, my misfortunes were greater, for you were not only in health, but had ſomething to laugh at I do not pity you, for you may releaſe yourſelf when you will, while I (God help me) in this ridiculous *ſituation*, as Mr. Blomer calls it—yet that ſhall not avail as an excuſe for keeping me moping about the houſe like a ſimpleton. Domeſtic felicity, indeed! I ſhall put an

end

end to it to-morrow, for I have the ſweeteſt party—and Blomer ſhall not go along to nurſe me. How a young, and otherwiſe well-enough ſort of man can behave ſo prepoſterouſly out of the way, is indeed aſtoniſhing! Adieu, dear girl, for my wriſt achs too.

LETTER X.

Lady Eglington to Mrs. Boothby.

HOW happy you make me by promiſing ſoon to join us.

And have you (or do you only flatter me) have you, indeed, hopes of my Amelia? Have you, indeed, met with many whoſe little heads whirled about by vanity, have, after the giddy hour is paſſed, ſettled into diſcretion and ſenſe? I know not what to think—ſometimes a ray of hope dawns for a moment, but the next daſhes it back. What a creature it would be were it never to ſpeak. —That ever ſuch a mouth ſhould pour out ſuch torrents of abſurdity!

I have at length prevailed on her to riſe before noon: by way of inducement, I obſerved the effects of early riſing on the complexion—" you had a better colour, my love, before you kept ſuch irregular hours: ſee your ſiſter's bloom—how pure! how lively! you have naturally as good, and one month's early riſing will reſtore it.

Oh!

Oh! my Lady, I ſhould not in the leaſt regret loſing it all, ſo my features were fine, and my face faſhionably turned. More colour could be eaſily added. Mira ſtarted—"Heaven forbid you ſhould ever think of painting Amelia!—Why not, madam? Pardon me—I cannot forbear laughing at your ſurprize: ſcarce a woman of any ſtile, or idea, but paints, whether ſhe has or wants complexion."

I pointed out the levity, the danger, the wickedneſs of this deteſtable practice; but ſhe anſwered, it was only my long reſidence out of the world occaſioned its appearing in ſuch formidable lights: one winter in town, ſhe would venture to aver, would perfectly reconcile me to it What ſhall I do with her? ſhe minds not any marks of diſpleaſure I ſhow: and it is her judgment I wiſh to convince, for without that I do nothing, and ſhe deſpiſes my opinion,

We yeſterday had a large party to dinner, and in the evening a concert: dancing ſucceeded. Mira was dreſt two hours before her ſiſter, but waited to introduce her: they entered together, and ſuch a pair of angels I never beheld! their perſons are exactly the ſame fine height, and proportion, and their features greatly reſemble.

The whole company ſeemed ſtruck with admiration, but which had the prefernce (if a preference there was) different taſtes muſt decide. Though there is as much dignity

and

and elegance in Mira's manner; it is ſoftened (not by a baſhfulneſs, but) by a gentle retiring, that blends delicacy with grace, and gives a bewitching intereſt to the whole. The grandeur of Amelia's air is full, and commanding: yet an inſinuative attraction reconciles you to its ſuperiority. The one is more dazzling, the other affecting: the effect of Amelia's firſt appearance is inſtantly compleat: the mind reſts ſatisfied, and has nothing further to wiſh. In Mira's, a promiſe of ſomething beyond attaches the heart, keeps expectation alive.

The ſiſters were equally attentive and polite to their gueſts, but to a nice obſerver, here too a difference was viſible. Mira's politeneſs ſeemed the reſult of inward ſatisfaction imparted by the company, and a deſire to contribute to the happineſs of others: Amelia's, a ſtrict attention to the rules of good-breeding.

When the country was praiſed, and ſhe aſked her opinion, I expected a bow, or ſome ſlight anſwer would have equally ſaved her good manners and ſincerity: how was I ſurprized to hear her give an unqualified approbation, and run on in a ſtrain of panegyric, which I at firſt miſtook for irony! Indeed, my dear madam, I had rather ſhe had ſacrificed ſomething to politeneſs, than to truth (and that with an eaſe that proved ſhe was accuſtomed to it) but I ſaw no occaſion for either.

She

She appeared ſo perfectly pleaſed with every one, that I began to hope ſuch agreeable company had really reconciled her to the country: but they were no ſooner gone, than ſhe ridiculed the perſons, manners, and dreſſes of the *tramontanes* (as ſhe ſtiled them) to ſuch a degree, that her father was under the neceſſity of deſiring her, though ſhe had ſhewn neither her judgment or good-nature, to preſerve ſome decency, and not thus affront him, in his friends.

"She begged his pardon, but had taken them only for the common run of company the country offered: and ſhe had never heard of friendſhip continuing beyond the ſeparation of a party. Indeed, ſhe thought the greateſt ſatisfaction all parties afforded aroſe from their perpetual fine and extenſive field for anecdote and ſatire."

A thouſand of her airy flights, and abſurdities, evidently aſtoniſhed her hearers, and kept both her father and me in pain whenever ſhe opened her mouth. 'Tis beautiful to ſee Mira on theſe occaſions endeavouring to throw herſelf between her ſiſter's errors, and our obſervation, by ſome quick and lively turn that gives ſuch a warmth to the veil; it is impoſſible to attend to any thing elſe.

But once yeſterday it was too much for her—the converſation unluckily leading to the faſhionable anecdotes of the day in London, Amelia run through them all with a volu-

volubility that animated the picture you drew of one of your morning viſitors: But (added ſhe) "of all the preſent *tête-à-têtes*, none intereſts me (as well as every other woman in England) like the affair of My Lord —— and Lady —— now pending. I hope to Heaven he won't ſuffer, for he is the ſweeteſt fellow! and the Ladies, with whom he is the greateſt favourite, will all break their hearts if he does.—You can have no idea how handſome he is! then ſuch a ſtile in all he does—Nonſenſe! to make ſuch a piece of work about trifles."

I knew not which way to look—Mira bent over her tea to hide her bluſhing face, while moſt of the Ladies played with their fans; and the Gentlemen (according to their different turns) either laughed aloud, or appeared diſguſted.

The hardened girl inſiſted (on my reproaching her this morning) there was nothing extraordinary in what ſhe had ſaid: thoſe were proper ſubjects for tea-table chat in all faſhionable circles; and the woman would be deemed a prude, and an hypocrite, who affected to diſlike them. Aye, worſe—would prove herſelf an idiot, and quite ignorant of *bon-ton*.

Sir Charles, at the time, either loſing all patience, or fearing the deferring his diſapprobation of ſuch ſhameleſs indelicacy, might be conſtrued into an encouragement of

what

what he ought to correct: was thundering out ſomething when the entrance of ſome more company interrupted him, and relieved all.

Glad was I when muſic ſucceeded, and ſhewed this flighty girl to better advantage, The charming twins now ſhone with equal luſtre—They ſung, they played in the ſame ſtile of excellence. Several of the company being muſical, we had a very agreeable concert. Among the performers Mr. Grandby was diſtinguiſhed: he is fond of accompanying Mira on the violin, which he plays divinely: but he poſſeſſes far ſuperior accompliſhments; and is indeed, an excellent young man. He was a boy when you left England, but you cannot have forgot his worthy father, who died two years ago. This, his eldeſt ſon (not long from Oxford) ſucceeded to the eſtate which is not now a very great one; but the preſent poſſeſſor's attention to its improvement, promiſes in time to render it conſiderable. He has ſome expectations too from an uncle—(Mr. Williams—an odd kind of character) who has been long in India. This Gentleman made one of our party yeſterday, and one of his ſallies made me ſmile—After looking earneſtly at Amelia, he ſuddenly aſked her, if ever ſhe wore a hat? then turning to me"—O never ſuffer her to wear a hat, for

" *If to her ſhare ſome female errors fall*
" *Look in her face, and you'll forget them all.*"

She

She bowed to this fine compliment: an evident proof ſhe either did not underſtand, or feel its ſeverity.

We are to have ſeveral parties of muſic and dancing round the neighbourhood, in which I hope you will join, for I begin to look out for you, and both my daughters grow impatient for your arrival. The one, principally for my ſake, 'till ſhe is acquainted with you: the other, for the dear ſake of ſomething new. M. EGLINGTON.

LETTER XI.

Mr. Grandby to Sir George Lovemore.

GIVE me joy, Lovemore—The doors of that temple of felicity, Eglington-Hall, are once more thrown open, and again I enter in, and worſhip! What were my ſenſations—ſenſations? Nonſenſe! anybody—you may have ſenſations: but what were the feelings of my ſoul; when, after an age of ſighing ſolitude, I yeſterday ſaw my Mira!

Check me not, Lovemore, for calling her mine—I will indulge, I will invite the dear idea 'till it abſorbs me in bliſs, which, if I am to be wretched, I ſhall at leaſt have ſnatched from fate, and have enjoyed ere it cruſhed me.

Did you but know her, you might indeed think me mad: but not on account of her

ſuperiority of fortune; that when you ſaw her, would not once occur to you. No, Mira—leaves not a thought beyond herſelf!

I cannot deſcribe my ſituation when the card of invitation arrived—I trembled—was ready to fly, and bleſs Sir Charles for ſending it—nay, did thank the ſervant who brought it, unknowing what I did.

No wonder!—ſuch a time ſince I ſaw—ſince I heard her—for though I went to pay my compliments on the death of Lady Blomer, and the arrival of another angel (a fallen one I fear) none of the Ladies were viſible till on this happy day.

Miſs Eglington uſed ever to be in the drawing-room before any of her gueſts: I ſearched in vain for the object that firſt bleſſed my eyes on every other occaſion: ſhe was ill—at laſt I ſhould not behold her—Lady Eglington relieved me—"ſhe was waiting for her ſiſter:" I wiſhed her ſiſter a thouſand miles off, tho' I had been prepared for a paragon; but what was the world to Mira! At length they entered—but it was a full hour ere I could look at Amelia.

How did they dare to ſay ſhe equalled her ſiſter? true, ſhe is as beautiful: but what is beauty without ſoul! without intelligence! her eyes are as fine, but they wander about in ſearch of admiration, and at laſt fix on vacancy: while the tender emotion, the thought ſublime, the lively idea; by turns

fill

fill and dance in thoſe of my Mira, and render her one charm of endleſs variety!

Yes, George—I am more than ever convinced a woman muſt think before ſhe can pleaſe: elſe whence the difference in thoſe twin beauties? Amelia may be the ſtatue of Pygmalion, but Mira is the ſoul that informs it. Not that the firſt wants animation, God knows—but all is mechanical: ſhe walks, and ſits, and looks, juſt as all the fine women in England walk, and ſit, and look: but Mira, as never woman did before!

Amelia's dreſs too (which, with me, is the reflecting-glaſs of a woman's underſtanding) the very extreme of the preſent prepoſterous mode—I wonder her vanity does not prevent her hiding ſuch a face, and boſom, with ſo much hair and tiffany. Thank Heaven! Mira (though obliged to conform in ſome degree to cuſtom) is not ſo ſervile an obſerver of faſhion as to prevent my following the lovely turn of her blooming cheek, and fine proportioned neck, without having my admiration checked in its career by an idea of the high-breaſted deformity humanity is too often ſhocked by, without the aſſiſtance of thoſe unnatural riſings.

Do you know, George, what the call thoſe handkerchief puffers? Why, merry thoughts, of all things—whether there's any thing merry in the above idea (which muſt often ſtrike) I leave you to judge. Some ſcar-cheeked,

wry-necked thing of quality firſt invented thoſe hiding-bags, and all the fools of faſhion run into them.

Had you ſeen my charmer's auburn locks waving to each graceful motion, how would you have execrated the yellow ſtuff that tarniſhed the beauties of their ſiſter treſſes! Yet Lovemore—all this I could forgive: but were you to hear her ſometimes ſpeak—faith—I know not what a fellow of ſuch free idea might imagine. Affectation, vanity, folly, were nothing—at leaſt nothing uncommon: but in truth, ſhe ſaid ſome things that made me ſtart.

Heavens! that a mouth ſo reſembling that of the ſweeteſt innocence, ſhould breathe ſuch different accents! Talk not of my ſcrupulous nicety (as you term it) I hate indelicacy in a man: and,

"*Want of decency is want of ſenſe.*"

But in a woman—where 'tis not enough ſhe ſhould not merely be indelicate; but where the pureſt refinement of expreſſion ſhould reveal the ſpotleſs mind that dwells within, that like the ſenſitive plant ſhould ſhrink from the very breath of indecency; and where the leaſt freedom of ſpeech betrays the idea that preceded, and, perhaps, more than was uttered; 'tis not to be forgiven—it cannot be excuſed:—it is not ignorance: 'tis not ſimplicity, Lovemore—'tis a taint of the mind. Then to ſee her ſiſter's ſenſibility on thoſe occaſions—her father's uneaſineſs—her mother's

fine

fine face overſpread with concern—had I fifty daughters, George, they ſhould never leave their mother: but then that mother ſhould not be an Amelia.

I will not tell you the worſt ſhe ſaid, for ſhe is Mira's ſiſter: but will repeat only one of her flights to give you an idea of her tenderneſs, as well as delicacy.

On a lively old gentleman aſking her to go out ſhooting with him, declaring he could make no hand of her ſiſter, who, the firſt and laſt time he could prevail on her to accompany him, was not only thrown into an agony by the fluttering, dying birds, and ran away, but could not touch them when dreſſed for dinner; (Oh! George, how I loved her)! Amelia replied—" Oh! Sir, you ſhould accuſtom Miſs Eglington to the ſport, or how, when ſhe appears in the world, will ſhe bear to turn executioner herſelf, and with the ſingle lightning of her eye, bring down a dying covey? But are you not of opinion their expiring at her feet would rather excite a ſmile than a tear?

You are a keen ſportſwoman, Madam, (replied Mr. Jones) yet I find, notwithſtanding your cruelty, you would reſtore your captive with an encouraging ſmile at leaſt.

O certainly, if only for the pleaſure of bringing him down again: at leaſt till I ſhould ſtart new game, or I might want amuſement you know.

" You, George, may call this nothing: but 'twas more than enough for me. Mira ſat next me.—A fine glow ſpoke the generous feelings of her ſoul: and is your's, a ſiſter boſom (whiſpered I) could Miſs Eglington ſmile but to deſtroy?

Far, far from my heart, Mr. Grandby, the wiſh to raiſe a hope it means not to confirm."

Lovemore—was this contraſt neceſſary to raiſe this woman in my eyes? How my heart warmed to her as ſhe ſpoke—as ſhe looked more than ſhe uttered—Ah! would ſhe but beam that ſmile on my love, how would that heart wear the treaſure in its deepeſt receſſes.

Not even my owing to Amelia the dear ſentiment I had juſt liſtened to, could reconcile me to her: I could ſcarcely bear to look at her, and almoſt hated the very reſemblance I at firſt adored her for: nay, had certainly turned her into the ridicule ſhe deſerved, but the tie that cloſely unites her to Mira; for I ever deteſted a coquette.

Conſidering every fine woman as an object of eſteem, of love, and delightful to trace her to the conjugal, the maternal character; my affections are all alive—but the leaſt tinge of coquetry, acts upon my feeling like damps to electricity, and inſtantly ſtops my career. Coquetry is not only a ſure ſign of ill nature, but in general, of a light and unprincipled mind alſo, and is the foundation on which

almoſt

almoſt every female vice is erected: it chills all the blooming affections of the heart, hardens it to pity, and (ſo far from keeping it alive) deadens it to joy. 'Tis the very antidote to love; for founded on opinion, love may exiſt amid the frowns of returning hatred, but at length dies on even the ſmile of deception. Thus, a coquette is not only a contemptible, but an unſucceſsful character: ſhe deſtroys her own aim, and for ever—

"*Dies with nothing but a rage to live.*"

We had a charming little concert: Amelia ſung divinely, but though with fine expreſſion, there ſeemed an effort in it that gave it too much the appearance of deſign: while Mira's ſwelling notes, and melting cadences flowed as if ſhe felt the ſtrains. Oh! how they fell down upon my heart, while the tear ſprung to my eye! where then, had I had any reſentments, any paſſions unſubdued; where then, had they fled? and where was the man I had not called a brother? We ſung ſome duets—Lovemore, is it not aſtoniſhing I ſhould be able to attend to what I am about, while in thoſe duets I addreſs her in the words of love, and ſtrains of rapture? 'Tis ſometimes as much as I can do to command myſelf I aſſure you; and I ſhall certainly forget myſelf ſome evening, and prove I am more than an actor; but when, in her parts, ſhe anſwers me with all that the livelieſt paſſion can dictate; and her dewy

lips breathe out—"Caro ſpoſo"—or, "Idol mio;"—I gaze on her eyes as they diſſolve in tenderneſs—my ſenſes ſwim—the notes dance before me—and I am indebted to chance alone for befriending me. Is it poſſible for any thing but love to give ſuch warmth—ſuch pathos—Interrupt me not, George: do, dear fellow, let me enjoy—at leaſt while ſhe ſings ſhe may—Lovemore, I would not hear her ſing duets in that manner with another for all the world could beſtow! 'Twould drive me mad—but where has the Siren led me?—

We afterwards danced: now ſay I am prejudiced: ſay I draw invidious compariſons: yet, I tell you, George, though the whole room was in a gape of admiration, I do not like Amelia's dancing at all: there is too much of the boarding-ſchool Miſs in it:—the maſter's work appears throughout the whole:—the ſet air—the ſtudy'd look—(ſhe may thank her features, if 'tis not a bold one) and a kind of *preparation*, deſtroys that harmony of motion, which ſeems a part of Mira when ſhe dances, not of the art.

She was my partner, Lovemore—I touched her hand—That hand, which by its yielding, or rejection, will one day decide my fate as to this life—Do you think the idea did not make me tremble! Supreme felicity, or miſery! No, my friend—Miſs Eglington inſpires no common paſſion, nor is mine a heart for ſuch receptions:

receptions: it was not formed for moderate joys or pains: I have ever felt them in extremes, and ſo will ever be content to feel them.

What luxury was mine while thrown on a ſopha I gave way to imagination! I was ſo abſorbed, I did not obſerve my ſoul's ſoft treaſure incautiouſly expoſing herſelf after dancing, with her ſiſter to the air; but was rouſed by Lady Eglington's riſing to warn them from the danger.

Amelia not uſed to reſign a gratification even to the entreaties of fond affection, would not be prevailed on to leave the window: Mira kiſſed the hand that drew her in, which ſhe continued preſſing to her boſom, her other arm encircling her mother's waiſt. She ſeemed thanking her tender care, for gratitude and love beamed from every feature, while the delighted parent bent over, as if to imbibe each tender accent: concern breaking away as ſhe liſtened, and by degrees giving place to ſerenity, and joy: what an intereſting ſubject for a painter! but no—'twas beyond his power to purſue: he might indeed have conveyed the attitude, the expreſſion: and his pencil might have caught one animated point: but he never would have varied the paſſions as they changed.

This ſcene, where duty and affection, diſreſpect and indifference preſented ſo ſtriking a contraſt, gave a turn to my ideas: I could not but explore the cauſes of this amazing

difference where nature had formed an equality. My thoughts dwelling with rapture on the riſing excellencies my charming girl muſt have daily diſplayed, from the moment of their firſt opening, to the cultivating hand of her mother, to this, that ſaw her all perfection, were ſuddenly harmonized: and though I ſeldom ſit down to make verſes, yet when their ſpontaneous flowers preſent themſelves to my hand, I do not diſdain to twine them. I had traced Amelia through her airy progreſs, her mind ſickening as her perſon improved: while

My lovely Mira, ſoft and fair
As April's new born roſe;
Beneath a mother's guardian care
A bud of beauty blows.

While warmer tints her cheek adorn,
Her eyes new luſtre caught,
As each improving riſing morn
Expands the glowing thought.

As ſtill the virtues bleſt controul,
With energy divine,
O'er beauty throws th'impaſſion'd ſoul,
Through which its graces ſhine!

And now—intelligence refined,
(Expreſſions magic charm,
Reflecting from her poliſh'd mind,)
Irradiates her form!

Sure

Sure ſenſibility, her zone
Has twined round Mira's breaſt:
Such ſweetneſs in each feature ſhown—
'Tis innocence expreſs'd!

Harmonious graces as ſhe moves
Their elegance impart:
While Love his pow'r unconſcious proves,
O'er each conſenting heart!

Adieu, Lovemore—If I have tired you on this ſubject, I'll write to you no more not becauſe I can write upon no other, but that I ſhall think you unworthy of it.

E. GRANDBY

LETTER XII.

Miſs A. Eglington to Lady Priſcilla Blomer.

I RETRACT Priſcilla—I retract all in my laſt about being better reconciled to the country. True, the firſt day's dreſſing, company, dancing, &c. amuſed me a little, but now it is the ſame thing over again; I am heartily ſick of it. The ſame unvaried ſet of faces for ever—I ſhould be tired of my own were I to ſee it ſo often.

What ſhall I do? and then all the morning—the morning here does not ſeem to conſtitute part of the day: no viſiting, no ſhopping, no ſales—nor any thing elſe to fill up

the

the wretched void! Did I not pity Mira's inſupportable taſte, I ſhould almoſt envy what renders her ſo inſenſible to all the horrors of her ſituation. The thing declares ſhe ſcarcely finds the day long enough for her various occupations and amuſements. Amuſements! God help her—

My mother will not let me reſt till I riſe in the morning: would to Heaven ſhe had better contrived to wear away the tedious day before ſhe lengthened it out ſo. When ſhe finds me lounging about, ſhe entreats me to work, to read, to play: and inſiſts, if I try my ſiſter's method one week only, I ſhall be happy.

Well, I take up a ſenſeleſs book, I do not underſtand a word of, and in a moment throw it down diſguſted. Then paint, or work a leaf—inſtantly my back achs—and I leave it fatigued to death. Next fly to the harpſichord, and ſing to the lifeleſs walls: my eyes wander—my voice falls—and I riſe ready to daſh it to pieces with vexation.

My father or mother read me a lecture worſe than the book, or peſter me with entreaties for impoſſibilities; and ſay, I am inſenſible to all affection, becauſe I am not inanimate as a log, and like that contented wherever I am thrown. If I try the gardens —the dark trees, and ſtill gloomy groves throw me into the horrors; or the bubbling caſcades ſet me to ſleep. If I ride out—the ſun and duſt parch and choak me: nor is there

there any thing to be ſeen or heard through all the country, but noiſy whiſtling clowns, and ſinging dairy-maids; with now and then a ſolitary carriage ſtuffed with a large-boned ſquire, and his fat ſquare dame, with looks as provokingly contented and happy, as if they really enjoyed their heavy lives.

At length, dreſſing-time relieves me: but this has its mortifications too—for why ſhould Amelia dreſs? or why ſhould ſhe look lovely? I am amuſed at the time however, though ſoon as the charming work is over, I gaze in the tantalizing glaſs, and cry—"Oh what a waſte is here," Then meet the ſame dull ſet, where the women have no ſpirit, and the men no gallantry. Do you know no charming fellow, my lady, who would break my priſon walls, and relieve a poor damſel in diſtreſs? There is not a creature near me (and they have what they call a choſen ſociety too) who let the temptation be ever ſo great, but would think ſuch an exploit a crime.

Why did my aunt (for I ſhall not be of age theſe hundred years) deny me the uſe of my fortune when I ſo much need the dear independance it would give me! and what ſignifies my enjoying it when I marry, if I am confined where neither my pride or reaſon can make a proper choice? for there is not a being here I would not bluſh to ſhew in public, or from whom I have not heard ſome muſty ſentiment, that proves were I his wife he

he would ding in my ears "domeſtic felicity," with as piteous a whine as ever your poor creature did. Had I foreſeen all this in the bleſt day of power, I had not been ſo careleſs.: but then I could never think of one thing, but another drove it out of my head: ſo I went on whirling about without giving myſelf time to fix on any one. Not but there are lovers enough here, but they are the ſtrangeſt out of the way things—ſo you may believe I do not much aim at conqueſts, for (however great the pleaſure) it humbles one too much to torture them.

There is Lord Forley—rather handſomiſh—a large fortune—fine title—and very particular to me—(in his own odd way I mean) but he talks morality, and does not like cards; think what a judge—he told me, had I but my ſiſter's turn of mind, I ſhould be fifty times more charming: what a domeſtic animal this would be you know.

I mentioned Grandby before as the divineſt fellow in the world—his perſon I could only mean: Oh he ſhould do nothing but look, ſing, and dance! as to talking, he is the very worſt of the whole ſet, and his inſipidity the more provoking too, for it is really a pity. Do you know, Priſcilla, he has the inſufferable aſſurance to pretend to adviſe me? (as he terms it) and to ſay, he would give the world to make me think! What a wretch! I was ready to call him one, but contented

myſelf

myſelf (we were juſt breaking up) with ſhaking my hair in his face; for he hates maréchale abominably: taſte in that too.

I was yeſterday gazing earneſtly in his face to try if all his features would bear examination, and he bluſhed like an idiot on only catching my ſcrutinizing eye: "Lord Mr. Grandby! what a violent twitch of the tooth-ach, to make you colour ſo! he bluſhed ſtill deeper, and was ſo confuſed he could not anſwer a word, yet gave me a look that ſeemed to ſay, it could have been a ſaucy one, had he not had ſome compaſſion.

I thought from the firſt Grandby was in love with my ſiſter: he is as curious a lover as every thing elſe: I never heard him ſay a fine thing to her yet, and were it not for his eyes and his whole ſoul viſible in the ardent attention he pays her every word and motion, one would never find it out. I fancy, ridiculous as he is, ſhe does not think him ſo, for ſhe bluſhes when he enters, and is all animation when he ſpeaks to her: then appears ſo intereſted in every thing he does—and ſo happy—this accounts for her not joining me in the London ſcheme. Beſides, did ſhe not love, ſhe would delight to torment him, you know. I am ſure Sir Charles ought not to approve of him though, for he has neither fortune (not a large one at leaſt) nor title to cover the deficiency: ſo he will never do.

Mira is at preſent quite dejected, and only at parting with a friend—Lady Helena Melcome

come, an aſtoniſhing favourite, and no wonder, for ſhe is juſt like herſelf, very handſome, and very ſimple—ſo has the honour (a mighty diſtinction truly) of being admitted a morning viſitor. They ſit in the raree-ſhow cloſet, work, and make verſes: or retire to a favourite grove they call Fairy Land, to read Shakeſpeare and Milton.

But lo! the inchantment breaks—for the old Dowager, having got the chin-cough, ſets off for Bath to-morrow, and the daughter (a comfortable office you will allow) attends as her nurſe.

I have not, though ſo tired, ſaid a word yet about Mrs. Boothby—"and who is Mrs. Boothby Amelia?" why a droll compoſition enough—Priſcilla, for ſhe is a little like my mother, and a little like me: ſo I cannot yet tell whether I ſhall like her or not. You ſhall know when I ſettle the matter, for ſhe is but juſt come, and ſuch a meeting—ſhe and my Lady were great friends a thouſand years ago: ſuch crying and talking of old times—my opinion had been decided at once, but that ſhe laughed with one eye, while ſhe wept with the other.

I rejoice my Lady your getting once more into the world, for now I may expect ſome entertainment: for heaven's ſake take care of yourſelf, leſt you ſhould be confined again, and Blomer ſend for your mother. Pity the wretch had not come here for a wife—here he

he had met domeſtics enough to his taſte. Thoſe odd geniuſes ſhould always chuſe from their own ſet of animals: then they would not ſpoil other people's happineſs. What, a letter again! ſure ſign I have nothing elſe to do.

A. EGLINGTON.

LETTER XIII.

Mr. Grandby to Sir George Lovemore.

GEORGE, I do not like your letter. Though Amelia were not my Mira's ſiſter—the daughter of the friends I ſo revere—I could not bear to hear your light reflections on errors, which from a generous breaſt ſhould call regret, not an unmanly triumph. Though I pretend not to excuſe, or gloſs them over, I never would forgive the man who could take advantage of an inexperienced woman's weakneſs, whoſe failings (after all) were more her education's than her own: ſtrange inconſiſtency! What a wretch were he, who, ſeeing a woman's perſon in danger, inſtead of exerciſing his ſuperior ſtrength or courage to relieve, would attempt to plunge her farther into harm! yet this he makes no ſcruple of doing to the mind, whoſe frailty much more materially claims protection.

You ſay there is nothing extraordinary in Amelia's conduct: that few women but are

as

as vain—as light: and declare ſhe is the very one you would not only like to trifle with, but could even love, though not eſteem. Oh Lovemore! How differently are we affected by beauty: I never behold it but my heart feels an intereſt for its welfare: I bleſs and wiſh it peace. "Could love though not eſteem!" Ignorant fellow! deſcribe ſuch paſſion by what name you will, but do not dare to call it love—ſhall I teach you to diſtinguiſh better? When you prefer the object not for your own, but for her ſake, and every ſelfiſh intereſt gives way to her dearer good; when you will be jealous of the wiſh even your own boſom prompts, that could ariſe to injure her; when paſſion chaſtened into fear, to awe, refines beyond all that the ſenſes yield; then, my friend—and not till then, you will love.

I am juſt going to Eglington Hall, where this luxury is all my own—Yes, George, I would—to make her happy—I would reſign—Oh! my heart! I cannot finiſh the ſentence—but ſure I would act, what now I dare not even think of.

* * * *

Oh! Lovemore, what a ſcene have I gone through! my fate is hanging over me in black ſuſpence, and I know not what to fear or hope! What would I not give to recall the time when I began this letter—it was tranquillity to this! I fear I have undone myſelf—Why did I touch the ſubject? While I was

ſilent,

ſilent, I could hope:—but now—yet I had no intention—the opportunity—the ſituation—I will tell you if I can.—

I found my Mira in tears: ſhe had juſt parted with her friend—the friend of her heart—tender attachment! ſecond to love alone—and like that deſigned by heaven to reflect itſelf into our boſoms! ſhe was alone in the garden.—

"Oh! Mr. Grandby, you will not wonder at my tears, when I tell you Helena is gone—but I will dry them, for inſtead of indulging my ſorrow, I ſhould be happy in reflecting ſhe will not be long away. Yet ſhe leaves ſuch a void in my heart"—and they ſtreamed afreſh—her tears! they fell upon my heart, and unguarded all its receſſes!—I wiped them with my handkerchief: kiſſed, and put them into my boſom.

"I will ever treaſure thoſe dear drops ſhed by affection—by you. Oh! Miſs Eglington!—if friendſhip can cauſe that void, what muſt he feel who loves like me, and loſes you for ever!" The very idea overpowered me, and burſting into an agony of paſſion, I threw myſelf into one of the ſeats.

"Heavens, Mr. Grandby—how you alarm—are you—are you going too? And did you—did you ſay, for ever!" Lovemore, ſhe was agitated—ſhe was evidently intereſted in the queſtion: and now her tears, as ſhe bent over me, guſhed in torrents from her eyes.

"Oh, God! (taking her in my arms, unknowing

knowing what I did)—Tears! and for me! Oh ceaſe, dear idol of my ſoul, or I ſhall curſe myſelf, however bleſſed—Why does my Mira weep?

I know not—Lady Helena—when I ſaw you ſo affected—and you ſaid you were going—going for ever!"—ſhe threw down her eyes—then raiſed them to mine, that drank in a flood of tenderneſs beyond a heart to comprehend that has not felt the joy,

" No, no, my love, leave you, while thus—it was only terror of what one day your frown—Mr. Grandby, (ſeeming to recollect herſelf, and riſing) I certainly ſhould be unhappy—ſhould be concerned—were you to leave us—were we never to ſee you more—let us walk in: Helena has ſo ſoftened my heart" (and ſhe ſighed) I took her hand: ſhe withdrew it—

" You are offended with me Miſs Eglington: perhaps the moment I fear arrives—perhaps I myſelf precipitate—Oh! avert the agonizing thought—one word—bid me but hope"—I threw myſelf at her feet as ſhe was turning away—ſnatched her hand to my heart, my lips, and again bathed it with my tears.

" Oh Grandby! I cannot bear thoſe—Why, why will you thus diſtreſs me! What am I—quick let me go.—

" I diſtreſs you! I who would die to bleſs you!" (and I let go her hand, as I gazed wildly in her face) " Oh ſtay—leave me not thus—one moment—ſay only you forgive me."

" Forgive

" Forgive you! Ah, Grandby! but can I forgive myſelf when miſery may—my father—my ſolemn promiſing"—and away ſhe flew with terror painted in her face, without explaining the myſterious words that hung, and ſtill hang heavy at my heart.

" Can I forgive myſelf when miſery may" —What do they mean, Lovemore? What do the portend? Oh, Mira! Why did you uſe them? But for that cruel parting ſentence I had been bleſſed indeed! All that preceded, ſhed balm upon my heart: but that—Yes, hope like the ſun's departing beam had, for a moment, coloured the glowing proſpect in my breaſt; but now—a dubious ſhade ſucceeds: black night may hang behind ſoon to plunge me in deſpair!

I remained ſome time in the garden, in a ſituation not to be deſcribed, revolving a thouſand times over the preceding ſcene, dwelling with rapture on the former part, and in vain endeavouring to unfold the latter: then tottered towards the houſe; but when near, my agitation ſo increaſed, I was retiring home, notwithſtanding my torture, till my ſuſpenſe ſhould be relieved, but Lady Eglington obſerving me from the window, I was obliged to proceed.

Mira was not in the room, nor did ſhe come down till called to tea. I never ſaw ſo conſcious, ſo ſweet a diſorder—Oh, George! does ſhe not love me? yet ſhe haſtily withdrew

drew her eyes from mine as ſhe entered, and ſeated herſelf far from me.

There was ſome company, and the converſation lively: but Mira did not, as uſual, ſhine, ſhe was dejected—abſent—confuſed—and I—you may well ſuppoſe my feelings were not attuned to mirth.

"Bleſs me, Mr. Grandby (cried Amelia) have you loſt a friend too!"

"I fear I have, madam, the only one that could make life deſireable to me." Mira looked down, her ſiſter ſtared—

"What, were you a lover of lady Helena's? I thought it was time to interrupt her.

"Nay, it was you put it in my head; you thought me dull: what ſo great a bleſſing as good ſpirits, or misfortune as their loſs?"

"Oh! was that all, but what reaſon can you have for low ſpirits? You like the country."

"I will have no low ſpirits here (ſaid Mrs, Boothby, a very lively agreeable lady now on a viſit at the hall) Miſs Eglington is too good to let even Lady Helena rob us of a gaiety the life of us all. If ſhe will favour us with a ſong, I know Mr. Grandby, notwithſtanding his fears, will find ſpirits enough to accompany her: (though looking archly at us by turns) there is ſomething wonderful in ſympathy too."

Mira begged to be excuſed this evening—the fond mother wiſhed her to be indulged, but Sir Charles ſaying, "My love, we will not excuſe you: I have not heard you to day, and feel rather low myſelf; but nothing attunes

tunes my mind to pleaſure like the muſic of your voice;" the ſweet girl flew to the harpſichord, but did not as uſual look on me to follow. Mrs. Boothby, however, again calling out, I was obliged to attend. I perceived Miſs Eglington looking out ſome of her leaſt intereſting ſongs, but fortune was malicious, and "Ah non laſcar me bel idol meo," was particularly deſired.

Why, Lovemore, was ſhe ſo effected? Why did her voice ſo faulter, ſhe could ſcarce articulate the words, or fill the notes? I had before ſeen the tear ſtart as ſhe ſung, but now it ſwelled in her eye. That I ſhould be agitated was natural, but why ſhould Mira —was it all for her friend? we at length bungled it through: Sir Charles thanked her for obliging him, though he feared ſhe was not well, and Mrs. Boothby cried—"come, pretty well, conſidering Lady Helena went to day. 'Ah, non laſcar me,' might very naturally raiſe tender ideas, and cauſe ſuch emotions: might not they, Mr. Grandby?" tender ideas, emotions indeed! Oh, how they flood over my ſoul, till I am loſt in them!

Amelia took her ſiſter's place, and I now played and ſung with rather more compoſure. The teazing Mrs. Boothby again attacked me—"why this is better you improve, Mr. Grandby; were I Miſs Eglington, though, I ſhould be half affronted at your accompanying her ſiſter with ſo much better grace. Yet ſympathy, as I obſerved before—for Amelia's

compoſure

compoſure will not endanger yours, and her impenetrable ſpirits enſure her tranquillity, though all the Helena's in the world were loſt for ever."

" I beg your pardon, madam, I am not ſo indifferent; my ſpirits are at preſent very weak, and you would think my performance poor indeed, had you ever heard me ſing in town. As to Mr. Grandby's doing me more juſtice, he played ſo horridly out of time, I really believe he endeavoured to put me out."

Mira was ſitting attentively melancholy in the window: when we finiſhed I approached her—Oh, George! ſhe avoided me—her averted eye ſtill retired from mine, though ſhe ſaw the anguiſh of my ſoul! not once would ſhe give me an opportunity of ſpeaking to her, and I was obliged, at length, to leave her without even hearing her repeat, that " I forgive you," which I fear ſhe now retracts. Good night, my friend—your heart light, careleſs, free, ſecures you better reſt than will fall to the ſhare of (or than may perhaps ever be enjoyed again by) your GRANDBY.

LETTER XIV.

Miſs Eglington to Lady Helena Melcome.

SCARCE has my Helena left me but my ſighs purſue her on the way: Oh! my friend, why did you not ſtay one moment longer

longer, that I might repoſe me on your boſom on the firſt uneaſineſs I ever felt? Sure there was ſomething in your preſence that guarded me from error and grief, and the moment you leave, they approach me.—

I am not ſatisfied with myſelf Helena—I have broken the ſolemn promiſe given in a ſolemn hour to the tendereſt, beſt of parents —Oh! had I been intentionally culpable, how ſhould I now abhor myſelf! No—" Dear authors of my being and every bleſſing it enjoys; never, never ſhall I forget that moment of mutual confidence and promiſe; and if my heart has dared to rebel, I'll bend it to your will, nor can the trial be ſevere that yields to your repoſe."

Mr. Grandby's affection for me, my Helena, has often remarked, and I ſhould have been blind indeed not to have perceived it myſelf. I ever was happy in his company, but this did not alarm me, for every one elſe was the ſame: yet have I often wiſhed, as I obſerved his attachment, to fulfil my engagement to my father: not that I abſolutely ſuſpected myſelf, but I thought his viſits, for his own ſake, ought not to be ſo frequently encouraged, unleſs equally agreeable to my parents. True, they every day declared their high opinion of Mr. Grandby, but not in the manner (however delicately expreſſed) the agreement implied; for they might approve as an acquaintance, and even a friend, whom

they would reject as a ſon. But Mr. Grandby, however he behaved, had never yet talked as a lover, and whatever his wiſhes, many obſtacles might prevent his power ever to do ſo.

This, this alone was the reaſon of my daily deferring the conference; yet think not an apprehended diſappointment alarmed my pride; no, indeed Helena: I was not ſwayed by ſo weak, ſo falſe a delicacy, for I feared no ſhame, where I could know no fault; but the anxious ſolicitude of my parents—the inference they would naturally make on the queſtion—Ah! would they not perceive the intereſt that occaſioned it? and then had I miſtaken Grandby's heart, and a diſappointment enſued; had they not been wretched leſt I ſhould feel it and ſuffer?

I intended on my ſiſter's return to us, thro' her to reconcile the difficulty; for ſhe might eaſily have obtained a knowledge of their minds without alarming their fears; but tho' ſhe ſoon ſaw Mr. Grandby's paſſion, and taxed me with returning it, her declaring ſhe never would approve him intimidated me, and checked my deſign.

When Mrs. Boothby came, I determined to ſubſtitute her as a properer perſon than my ſiſter, but waiting a few days to get a little better acquainted with her (for though a dear friend of my mother's, I could not immediately enter on ſuch a ſubject) the moment arrived that proved I had deferred it too long.

My

My eyes were ſtill flowing for your departure, when Grandby joined me in the garden: to you, who have ſo often ſeen the warmth of his heart, (glowing with every generous feeling) continually intereſting itſelf in the happineſs or woe of every ſurrounding object, I need not deſcribe his behaviour on this occaſion. The paſſion that had ever before ſhewn itſelf more in his manner than words, now threw over the whole ſo affecting, ſo touching an intereſt, that a confuſion and fear, I cannot account for, took intire poſſeſſion of me, and then talking of your abſence—ſomething he ſaid of love—of himſelf—and of loſing me for ever, in a violence of agitation and grief; frightened—affected me—and called out all the ſentiments till now concealed in my heart. I knew not what I ſaid, but his tranſports proved it was more than I ought, and inſtantly rouſed me to recollection, and with it to a ſenſe of my error. I had ſuffered my heart to engage itſelf in violation of my promiſe to parents who confided in its faith —I had diſcovered to Grandby the tenderneſs I felt for him, and was encouraging the paſſion my father's approbation had not yet ſanctioned me to liſten to—I might be deceiving the man who had a claim to my gratitude, with hopes, it might never be in my power to fulfil—Theſe, Helena, were the ideas that in the firſt moments of reflection ruſhed at once upon my mind, while terrified I flew

from him, and locked myſelf up in my room I inſtantly determined to avoid Mr. Grandby, till I could with innocence hear him, and not to keep him longer in ſuſpence, will, as ſoon as poſſible obtain my father's opinion. Oh! if while wiſhing to avoid, I have but plunged into error—I have, I have—or whence my emotion, when obliged to go down? I thought I ſhould have ſunk when I ſaw Mr. Grandby, and ſomething (like guilt, I believe) ſtruck on my heart when I looked up to the parents I fear I have deceived.

I know not how I got through this firſt painful evening of my life. Oh! my Helena, what a balm to the heart is its own approbation, and how did even the fear of offending damp every enjoyment of mine; was I ever unhappy before in the ſociety of my family? —of Grandby?—to-morrow evening too— how ſhall I behave to him?—he is to dance with me—he will then have an opportunity —I cannot before ſpeak to my father, who will be engaged all the day with a friend he expects. If till then I but liſten, or ſpeak to him, my heart will ſurely betray itſelf: it knows no diſguiſes, it cannot aſſume them: but how I teaze you—no: for is not Helena the friend of my boſom? It is late—yet how can I reſt while my mind—I will endeavour to compoſe it notwithſtanding the fears that ſurround it: for ah! ſhould Grandby not be approved—he will, he will: and then I will

give

give way to the dictates of my heart that would not keep him one moment in ſuſpence, were it at liberty to receive, as it wiſhes, the affection it joys to inſpire. Heaven ſoon reſtore my Helena to her

MIRA.

LETTER XV.

Mr. Grandby to Sir George Lovemore.

LOVEMORE—was I ever happy? was there ever a time when my heart received the livelieſt impreſſions from every object that ſurrounded me? When it reflected the ſmiles of Nature, and expanded in the view of Creation? When enraptured it joyed in the bliſs, or fell at the woe of another? If there was, 'tis gone, 'tis gone.

The words that kept me waking all the night, are now explained, indeed, and the intereſt Mira diſcovered antecedent to them, was the effect of common friendſhip only, perhaps a little heightened by the pity of a tender heart for the anguiſh it knew it occaſioned. How fondly had I dwelt—how fondly hoped—the deluſion is over—Oh! Lovemore! ſhe will never be mine—and—horror! —do I live while I write it—ſhe will—ſhe muſt be another's!

* * * *

I was obliged to lay down my pen—I will proceed more coolly—and let you know—what! tell you myſelf, that the woman I adore will be poſſeſſed by another! tell you I ſhall gaze no more on thoſe eyes that thrilled an elyſium through my ſoul! yet, Lovemore, if ſhe's happy—But ſhe never can be ſo happy as with me, for never can another—forgive me, my friend,—my Lovemore—forgive my tranſports—you know the impetuous torrent of my paſſions that raiſes and depreſſes—and leaves me now exhauſted—where are you, Oh! my friend! Why don't you come, and let me reſt my ſinking head on the ſoothing boſom of friendſhip—did you but know what I this moment feel, you would pity and relieve——.

* * * *

Again I am compoſed, and will correct myſelf; yet chide me not—All elſe I could have borne: had fate ſhowered all her raging plagues on my devoted head; collected in myſelf, I could have braved the ſhock: but this was the fine-ſpun paſſion of my ſoul, where but the ſlighteſt touch muſt lacerate its throbbing ſtrings!

After a day that only could be equalled by the night that preceded it; I went to an engagement, I believe I mentioned, where Mira was to dance with me. I was the firſt in the room: it was long before it filled; and long, long before my Mira—my Mira! Oh! ſhe never was—but yet I am calm.

At

At length ſhe entered attended by a lover —yes, Lovemore—a new, a ſucceſsful lover. —She liſtened to him, ſmiled on him, and though engaged to me, ſhe danced with him —Nay, to ſtab me deeper, ſhe aſked my leave to do ſo.

When I paid my compliments to Sir Charles on his entrance, he introduced me to Lord Sedley: a young nobleman, whoſe virtues rendered him (he was pleaſed to ſay) worthy my acquaintance. I had heard before a very high character of this gentleman, who is juſt returned from his travels, but little imagined he was the man deſigned by Sir Charles for his daughter. There has been long an intimacy in the families, and it was eaſy now to underſtand Miſs Eglington's meaning:—"Could ſhe forgive herſelf for giving way to the compaſſion that might in the end make me miſerable, by indulging my hopes while ſhe was engaged to another?"

Lord Sedley's father had been not long before at the Hall, when, I ſuppoſe, the affair was concluded—no doubt, on its proving agreeable to the parties, for neither Sir Charles's principles or tenderneſs would allow him to uſe the leaſt reſtraint; and that there was no occaſion for reſtraint, was too, too evident indeed! as for my Lord's part, what doubt but he would love as ſoon as he ſaw her? He did, Lovemore—he ſat by her as I uſed —and gazed on that face as if it were myſelf.

She looked no longer at me—ſhe ſcarcely liſtened when I ſpoke—but was ever attentive to him. My heart was ſo full, I retired to one of the windows to collect myſelf a little before the dancing began, for which they were now preparing.—She followed me—Oh! when I ſaw her coming to me—for a moment, Hope—The phantom vaniſhed as ſhe ſpoke.

" Mr. Grandby I have a favour to aſk of you: will you oblige me?"

I took her hand—" Oblige you! Oh! Miſs Eglington—The blood that now runs cold at my heart, ſhould ceaſe to flow to make you happy."

" How can you think, Mr. Grandby, I"—a dawn of tenderneſs appeared: it was gone ere I could bleſs it.—" Nay, it is but a trifle I have to requeſt: will you excuſe my dancing with you to-night?" (I ſtarted) " Lord Sedley—"—I dropped her hand ſuddenly—that hand that ever before thrilled rapture through my veins, ſeemed now a ſcorpion to my touch. " Lord Sedley is ſolicitous to be my partner; he is a particular friend of my father's, and I wiſh to oblige him."—And ſhe hurried through the cruel ſpeech as if impatient to leave me—leave me, and go to Lord Sedley. A ſigh, that ſeemed rending my heart-ſtrings, was the only anſwer I could return.

" Then you won't indulge me, Mr. Grandby?"

She was turning away, concern and diſappointment in her face.

" Stay, Madam," (claſping my hands as I ſpoke) " I dare be wretched, but I cannot obſtruct your wiſhes. Go, Miſs Eglington, and bleſt be the man you favour."

She was affected—but ſtill ſhe went: yet not immediately to her happy partner: ſhe left the room, and, when ſhe returned, I perceived the trace of a tear upon her cheek—it fell for me, George—in compaſſion to the ſufferings ſhe ſaw me endure—Angelic ſoftneſs! I will not interrupt your felicity. I will go—Mira ſhall ſee me no more.

The moment they began dancing I left the room. The ſight was inſupportable: all my rights uſurped! all ſnatched from me at once! I flew to the garden, threw myſelf on a bank—my tears watering the graſs. The moon ſhone bright: my heart ſickened at its beams. The wind ſuddenly roſe, black clouds gathered in the Heavens, and inſtantly obſcured its luſtre, while a few large drops fell cold upon my head.

" Emblem of my fortune," I cried, " thus was my boſom ſerene and gay: deſpair has overtaken my youth, and I weep the woes of my heart." Again the winds were heard: they diſperſed the clouds: the face of the moon was cleared, the drops gliſtened in its beams as they danced on the waving leaves, and the proſpect brightened around.

"Deceiver! Again the Heavens may ſmile, the vallies glow in its lights:—again the flowers may raiſe their heads, but joy will never more enliven my boſom—for now, even now, the deſtroyer of my peace preſſes that hand, while ſhe liſtens to his vows."—The idea ſtung me into life—I ſtarted up—Imagination was not to be borne, and I haſtened back to the houſe where I ſaw it realized, and lived.

While muſing on a ſopha, Lady Eglington came, and ſeated herſelf by me: with tender ſolicitude ſhe enquired of my health—"Why ſo dejected? was I ill?" I was oppreſſed—ſomething ſeemed choaking me—I would have given the world to have been in the garden again: I once flattered myſelf Lady Eglington would be propitious—'tis over. She ſaw my emotion, and with a ſympathy that entered into my feelings, ſaid—

"Mr. Grandby I ſee ſomething affects you, but hope you have no real cauſe of uneaſineſs: if you had, it would indeed diſtreſs me, for I have ever loved you as if you were my ſon."—("O God! Lovemore—!") "but I know young men of your lively imagination, and ardent temper, are always painting in the ſtrongeſt colours whatever ſhadows preſent themſelves to your fears."

I could not, dared not ſpeak: but preſſed to my lips the hand ſhe condeſcended to lay on mine, as ſhe ſpoke. Ah! Lovemore! if

as

as I ſuſpect, ſhe ſees into my heart, does ſhe think the loſs of her angel daughter a ſhadow? and that my woes are the colourings of imagination only?

Amelia came up—"Oh! Mr. Grandby, you have loſt your partner: Well, you ſee what a title can do. Don't you think Sedley a mighty pretty fellow? I proteſt I do." Lady Eglington felt for me.

Mad girl! Do you think every one ſets the value you do on ſuch baubles? Go, go, your partner is looking for you.

"A bauble, my Lady! a title a bauble—Oh! the pretty thing—Ah! it has a thouſand, thouſand irreſiſtible charms! and my ſiſter's of the ſame opinion you ſee, or ſhe would not have turned off poor Grandby—but let me fly—My Lord Sedley's juſt leading her off a new dance."

"Was Mira engaged to dance with you to-night, Mr. Grandby?" (aſked her Ladyſhip).

"She ſaw I was not very well, Madam."

Lady Eglington looked both ſurpriſed and concerned.—Amiable woman!—ſhe would not have me too hardly treated; and if I was to reſign that hand for ever, it was cruel—yet I will not complain.

Had I been infectious, Mira could not have ſhun'd me more.—She need not fear—I will not torment her with my pains, nor ſhall the drooping object of her hatred—yet, why

ſhould

ſhould ſhe hate me, becauſe ſhe loves another? Ah! when we truly love, all other affection diſguſts!

After ſeeing Lord Sedley hand and follow her into the carriage, unconſcious of my own intention, I diſmiſſed my ſervants and purſued its track. I got as near the houſe as poſſible, and went round to that ſide where Mira's chamber lay. A ſecret ſatisfaction pervaded my breaſt, when, by the lights in the room, I believed ſhe had not long remained with my rival: but this ſoon gave way to the mad'ning reflection that ere long—If Lovemore there's a hell upon earth, it is to ſee the idol of our ſouls in the arms of another! Oh! George—let me fly—let me inſtantly fly.

I continued on the ground, my eyes fixed on the window on which the moon reflected its rays; 'till the ſhadows of night were diſperſed, and the ſilence that inwraped me was interrupted by the ſounds of harmony, content and gladneſs that echoed throughout the country.—Congenial ſounds no more!—I fled them—and haſtening home threw myſelf on the bed, where I remained (ſleep ſtill a ſtranger to my eyes) till the glooms of evening again approaching, I roſe to write to you, for Eglinton-Hall no more invites my ſteps to joy and rapture, and why ſhould my deſpair ſadden the happineſs that would but torture me? Yet I will go to-morrow, and learn

the

the concluſion—(I cannot bear the thought) and will then take an eternal leave of the treaſure of my heart, and carry the empty caſket, I care not whither.

LETTER XVI.

Mr. Grandby, in Continuation.

I AM juſt returned from Eglington-Hall, but ſaw Mrs. Boothby and Amelia only, who were walking in the garden. Lord Sedley was juſt gone out—Yes, I ſaw him mount his chariot in triumph, enjoying his ſucceſs.

I had prepared myſelf by ſummoning all my reſolution for the information I expected, and all was needful indeed. Amelia (who was ready enough to mortify me with particulars) cried out the moment ſhe ſaw me—"Oh! Mr. Grandby, I have the fineſt news for you—we ſhall ſoon have a wedding in the family; a noble one too, that's the beſt of it, don't you think ſo?"

Where was her pitying mother now to take her off me? I turned to Mrs. Boothby—I expected more tenderneſs, more delicacy from her.

"Sir Charles—The Ladies are well, Madam?"

Oh! very well: all ſhut up in conſultation theſe three hours. My Lord is rather ſudden I think—but lovers you know—

Sudden

Sudden indeed, Madam!

Ah! you will not be ſurpriſed when you are a lover yourſelf: were you ever in love Mr. Grandby? Well, they will be a charming pair.

And a glittering one too, (obſerved Amelia) there will be ſuch dreſſes, and ſuch jewels, and ſuch equipages—and my Lady Sedley here, and my Lady Sedley there—will not it be delightful Mr. Grandby?

I attempted a ſmile in reply, but it muſt have been a ſickly one indeed, if 'twas true to the anguiſh I felt. Mrs. Boothby looked at me—Oh! it was cruel.

"Why, really Amelia, my Lord has offered generouſly; the ſettlements are truly noble; are ſplendid!"

Generouſly? Oh! Lovemore; had I had empires—worlds—but I had not thought of them, while I offered her my heart.

"Lord bleſs me, Mr. Grandby! why you do not ſay a word, and you look as melancholy as if you were not glad! but when you ſee the preparations, you will be enlivened: there's nothing puts me in ſuch ſpirits as preparations, and ſomething going forward; beſides, you will be at the wedding, and bridesman I dare ſay, "(confuſion!)" for Mira and you were ſuch friends—and you were ſuch a favourite!"

"Was ſhe my friend Miſs Eglington? Was I a favourite?" and I ſtooped down to gather

gather a flower, while I run my hand over my eyes.

" Aye, (anſwered Mrs. Boothby) and Lord Sedley too admires you vaſtly, though he ſaw you to ſuch diſadvantage the other evening: what in the world could ail you? Lord! how he praiſed you next morning at breakfaſt!"

Curſe on his praiſes! were there no racks, no tortures to ſave me from thoſe women's tongues! Mrs. Boothby's ſavageneſs at length gave way to her ſex, for before ſhe ſeemed to enjoy my agony.

"But though propoſals have been made Mr. Grandby, we are not certain they will be accepted: Miſs Eglington may"—Amelia interrupted her—untimely flippancy—more odious than ever. My fate ſeemed ſuſpended while Mrs. Boothby ſpoke.

" Oh Madam! what fear of that, reject a coronet, and ten thouſand a year indeed! a character too after her own heart—my father ſays, he knows not one more enviable. No, no; ſhe is not quite mad."

Quite; what did ſhe mean by that? But alas, ſhe had no meaning. I had, however, too much reaſon to accord to her concluſion, though not on account of the coronet and fortune! I knew they would not influence a Mira—but her behaviour to him—to me—left not a doubt, left not a hope behind.

Oppreſſed, exhauſted, ready to ſink at their feet, I abruptly took my leave, and as

ſoon

ſoon as I ſettle ſome neceſſary affairs, will bid this place adieu for ever: but I will firſt ſeek Mira in the garden (I know her hours of walking) from her mouth receive my doom, and bleſs her before I go. Yes, my friend—I will go—not with a proſpect that change of place will reſtore my peace, for, like the ſtricken deer, I ſhall ſtill bear the arrow in my heart: but I cannot, cannot ſtay to ſee her yielding to another—The very ſcene Amelia racked me with, ſtill haunts my burning brain; and ſhall I ſtay to ſee it realized? Yet, in juſtice to myſelf, I ought to do every thing in my power; like a dying man who takes a medicine as a duty, and for the ſatisfaction of his friends. If ever I may hope a mitigation of my pain, it is abſence only can impart it, and all I can, I will do. Expect one letter more from me, and then—Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

Sir George Lovemore to Edmund Grandby, Eſq.

FOR ſhame, Grandby—why what a dying, whining, fooliſh fellow! pity you? I do indeed! for of all the puppies—upon my ſoul I have no patience with you. While you had hope I could forgive your nonſenſe; but now for a trifling woman to hear a fellow, might make a thouſand hearts ach, talk inceſſantly

ceſſantly of *tremblings*, *agonies*, and *arrows*, and the devil knows what: it is not to be borne. Now put on a tragedy face, and whine out in piteous dudgeon——

" *He jeſts at ſcars who never felt a wound.*"

But I have though—an hundred—though I do not make ſuch a fuſs (as the women ſay) " bleſt be the man ſhe favours"—and after this romantic flight to lay ſighing under her window all night—like a milkſop as you are! If you cannot live without her, why the devil do not you fire the houſe, inſtead of looking at it, and off with her: and if Sedley's in the way, why—cut his throat, can't you?

Talk of Mira—Amelia's worth a thouſand of her: I always thought ſo—at leaſt ſhe will not deceive you: 'tis nature, while thoſe veiled women, after alluring ſimpletons like you, ſooner or later drop the maſk, and laugh at you as ſhe does. I cannot bear her for making ſuch a fellow unhappy; for after all, you are moſt confoundedly hurt, I ſee that, and my heart (for I do love you) bleeds for your diſtreſs.

But Edmund, rouſe yourſelf, dear fellow do, and come to me (you ſhall not go abroad) and I'll do every thing you'd have me; nay, be ſerious if it will pleaſe you. 'Sdeath! when I thought ſhe loved you—and ſhe did; for how could ſhe do otherwiſe? But that d—-d Sedley, with his coronets and ſtuff—had I

foreſeen

foreſeen all this, by heaven I had ſtopped him on the way; he never ſhould have reach-Eglington Hall to make you wretched—nay, if you will let me yet—ridiculous! that ſuch a ſwordſman (one who would fight the devil too) ſhould be thus eternally preaching againſt duelling; but you may allow me tho'—I have no ſcruples—my conſcience will not choak me.

Now do not be offended Grandby; how can I bear to let you loſe the woman you adore? Were you like me it would not ſignify, for though I love them as well as you can do (I will call it love in ſpite of your ſenſeleſs definition) not all the ſex together ſhould rob me of my peace.

I wiſh Lord Sedley had fancied Amelia inſtead of her ſiſter—though I am half in love with that girl myſelf; for there would be ſome ſport in reforming the charming little rake, or—in making her pay for her obſtinacy.

Now courage, Grandby—If you will ſee your tyrant, and tamely give her up to a rival in ſpite of all theſe reaſons; let her not triumph in your folly I beſeech you; but ſhew her you are no ſilly toy, the plaything for a woman's vanity. Haſten to Oxford, you once were happy here, and will be ſo again if you'll exert yourſelf, for you've a mind would raiſe you to the ſtars, but for that ſilly heart that ever pulls you down again.

Write, if you do not come immediately, or I ſhall be more uneaſy than you can believe,

lieve, for though I did affect to laugh at you, never did even a woman's tears touch me as yours have done. If you will go abroad—why—we'll go together, Grandby: I will not truſt you to your ſorrows without my aid to baniſh them. Adieu, dear boy—be good, and I will ſubſcribe myſelf your ſympathizing

LOVEMORE.

LETTER XVIII.

Miſs Eglington to Lady Helena Melcome.

AT length 'tis given me to relieve the anxiety my Helena's letters ſo expreſſively tell me ſhe feels.

While perplexing myſelf how beſt to bring about my deſign, an accident (ſo I muſt call it) ſaved me all further conſideration on the ſubject. Lord Sedley arrived the morning after I wrote, and in the evening accompanied us to a ball, where he begged to be my partner. I had been wiſhing to decline dancing with Mr. Grandby, fearing, if I did, he would not neglect the many opportunities he would have to touch on the ſubject neareſt his heart, and I therefore immediately engaged myſelf to Lord Sedley; depending on Grandby's politeneſs for leave, as his Lordſhip was a ſtranger and our gueſt for a few days.

He was in the room when we entered: he looked ill, Helena—I dared not truſt myſelf

to

to ſpeak to him—what violence did I do myſelf that night—Ah! Grandby, had you known —Well, I was obliged to ſpeak to him, at laſt, about Lord Sedley, and fearing that warmth which is ſo apt to unguard him, took the opportunity his being alone at the other end of the room gave me. Helena, I cannot tell you how he looked—nor what he ſaid—he took my hand with ſuch a face of woe—I tried, but for my ſoul could not withdraw it.

I thought he would not like the propoſal, for the inſtant I began he ſtarted from my hand as if electrified, and would not anſwer till he ſaw me going (perplexed how to ſettle the difficulty I had brought on myſelf) but he then called me back, with ſuch a voice—with ſuch a ſoul in all his aſpect—and in ſuch a ſolemn manner bid me go—he'd not obſtruct my wiſhes—that my heart ached as I turned away to hide the paſſion ſpringing to my eyes.

Dear fellow! he ſuppoſed I really preferred dancing with my Lord: when, had I been at liberty, I would have told him inſtantly, I wiſhed to be his partner, not only that evening, but for life. Yet it was more neceſſary to avoid him than ever, for I do not think I could have commanded myſelf any longer, and Lord Sedley beginning to grow troubleſome with his attention, but drew my Grandby nearer to my heart.

Yes, Helena—I now perceived him in earneſt; for before I attributed his behaviour

to

to that ſtyle of compliments men ſo ridiculouſly think themſelves obliged to pay our ſex as words of courſe: and which rather at firſt ſurpriſed me from Lord Sedley, whoſe better ſenſe I expected would have diſtinguiſhed him from the wretched tribe of triflers. I paid him no more attention than politeneſs abſolutely required, for my thoughts were all abſorbed by Grandby, who had now been ſo long out of the room I believed him gone away; but when he returned—and ſat ſolitary—penſive—far from me—Oh how I hated Sedley's eyes and ſpeeches! I wiſh I had not danced with him.

My mother went to Grandby—God for ever bleſs her for it! ſhe almoſt adores him, and what greater proof of merit need he have?

Glad was your poor Mira when this irkſome evening was over, and ſhe found herſelf in her own room freed from Lord Sedley—and at liberty to think of Grandby without inceſſant interruptions.

Next morning my Lord renewed his addreſſes, and notwithſtanding all the diſcouragement he received, made formal propoſals to my father, who, after receiving the honour as his Lordſhip's merit as well as birth deſerved, declared his further conſent (Heaven reward him) depended ſolely on his gaining mine; but promiſed to open the matter to me immediately himſelf.

Oh!

Oh! my friend—When I received a ſummons to attend him and my mother on this ſubject, need I declare the perturbation of my heart! They ſaw it as I entered, and the paternal hand was inſtantly held out to me.

" Mira—my darling girl—why this agitation? Look up my love; there are none here but idolizing friends."

Even this could not aſſure me, Helena—my guilty heart—'twas that, that would not let me ſpeak.

" Mira (continued my father) I remember well (nor will I ever break it) the promiſe I have made you."—Had I not reaſon to look down—to bluſh, Helena?

" Lord Sedley has made great propoſals, but his worth alone ſtamps value on them: yet not even this ſhall ſway me: your happineſs is all I wiſh for. I think by giving you to him I ſhould enſure it; but you, Mira, muſt determine for yourſelf."

" Oh, Sir—I never can be happy with Lord Sedley— I——"

" Why do you heſitate, my love (ſaid my mother taking my hand) but why ſo quick? So certain? You have not yet taken time to conſider: your father does not mean you ſhould at once reſolve in his favour, but only wiſhes to know whether my Lord ſhall have permiſſion to try to gain your heart?

" Oh! Madam—Oh! my Father! a ſenſe of my unworthineſs alone has kept me ſo long

long ſilent, and has prevented my thanking you as my grateful heart prompts me, for the goodneſs it feels it does not merit. Yet permit me to declare, no time is neceſſary on this ſubject, nor can it alter my ſentiments in favour of Lord Sedley.

" Unworthy! (repeated my father) you never were, you cannot be unworthy! But why ſo peremptory? Has my ſweet girl yet ſeen the man ſhe would prefer to Sedley?"—I trembled—the blood fled from my heart—my mother ſmiled on me, while her penetrating eye ſeemed darting through my boſom.

" Ah Mira! Mr. Grandby!"—I felt a blow on my breaſt—the light ſuddenly vaniſhed from my eyes, and when I recovered, I found myſelf in my mother's arms—my father preſſing my hand to his lips, and both ſoothing me with the tendereſt words of affection.

" My Angel be compoſed—what wonder you ſhould love Mr. Grandby! you would have no eyes, no heart were you blind to ſuch diſtinguiſhed merit? Sir Charles approves.

I do—beyond even Sedley's worth: had I looked round the world, Grandby's the man I had preferred for Mira: and your election but confirms the opinion I ever had of your virtues." The dear, dear words! how they reſtored me to life—to happineſs and peace! Were I to live for ever, Helena—I never ſhould forget the feelings of that moment—yet a weight returned on recollection I had

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I had not yet clear'd myſelf of intentional diſobedience, the more painful to ſupport from the goodneſs that did not even mention the fault I appear'd to have committed. Throwing myſelf at the feet of the dear authors of my life, and of the mighty bliſs it now enjoy'd; I attempted to explain the whole; but the big paſſion of my heart not allowing utterance to my words, I haſten'd for the copy of my letter to you, and putting it into their hands, begg'd that my motive might mitigate the offence and reſtore me to that good opinion without which even yet I muſt be wretched.

On retiring to my room, every ſentiment of my heart full, I thank'd with grateful fervor the Being that gave me to enjoy this happy day; and implored him ſtill to bleſs the proſpect it had opened.

Hearing my father's door open juſt as I roſe, tranquil and light as innocence and peace; I haſtened, and prevented my tranſported parents ſeeking me, to thank me as they ſaid—they were in tears, Helena—of rapture they appeared—they claſped me to their boſoms—called me their generous, noble girl; and my father bid me, when agreeable to me, to refer Mr. Grandby to him, and he ſhould have his ready, glad conſent.

And now, Helena, congratulate your friend —The happieſt—happieſt of her ſex—But where is my Grandby? why ſtays he from me now, when I can now ſee him as he wiſhes? 'Tis long ſince I beheld him, and I ſhould have

have fears about his health, but that he has been ſeen buſily employed among his tenants, who ever bleſs his footſteps. I know he is much taken up about improvements, yet he ever 'till now had time for me. Is he offended? Ah, no! he can't be ſo with me—and if he is, I'll ſmile, or weep, 'till he forgives me.

I find a ſecret pleaſure, Helena, in going to the garden, and ſitting in that very ſpot where firſt he ſpoke his love; and when the hour comes that uſed to bring him to me—I liſten for his ſtep—and look in vain for his appearing—then, when it paſſes—how empty ſeems the world! three days!—ſhall I never ſee him more!

Lord Sedley has received a polite refuſal: whether the ſituation of my heart has been intimated to him I know not; but he looks melancholy—hopeleſs—and is now ſilent; I am glad he leaves us ſoon, for I pity him now, and cannot bear to be the cauſe of a diſtreſs I can't relieve. You are ſometimes amuſed by my poetical attempts.—The following lines owe their origin to the ſentiment Lord Sedley's looks gave riſe to a few hours ago.

Alas! poor youth! I ſee that riſing ſigh,
While all thy ſoul is ſtarting in thine eye!
The love you dare not utter I perceive,
I ſee, I pity, but I can't relieve.
Our ſex too oft to cruelty incline,
But who could triumph in a pain like thine?
And yet 'tis generous pity to ſuppreſs,
Compaſſion may the lover's hope increaſe:

Hope is love optic, and will magnify
To mountains, atom's reaſon can't deſcry.
Happy the Maid who can the medium find,
Who far from trifling with a generous mind;
To mitigate the pain ſhe gives, delights,
Yet prudence with compaſſion ſtill unites:
Who checks the lover, and the friend retains,
And thus a greater, nobler triumph gains!

Abſence, no doubt, will ſoon effect Lord Sedley's cure, for thoſe ſudden impreſſions generally fly with equal rapidity, eſpecially when not encouraged or indulged: the former he was not expoſed to, the latter his good ſenſe will guard him from.

My Siſter is quite angry at my Lord's diſmiſſion: ſhe talks of coronets and diamonds as if they could rival Edmond's lips and eyes —I can forgive her opinion of my taſte, but how—how can ſhe be blind to Grandby!

Adieu! my loved girl—ſhare with me the joy your preſence only could increaſe.

LETTER XIX.

Mr. Granby to Sir George Lovemore.

DESPAIR ſhould never overcome the generous mind—let not the wretch, ſhould his fortune frown to-day, deſpond, for it may ſmile again to-morrow.

Love-

Lovemore—I once aſked, if ever I had been happy? I thought I had. But no—I never lived, never was bleſt 'till now!

How did you dare mention my Angel with ſuſpicion? George—But for ſome parts of your letter, I would not anſwer the other—I wont—but by continuing my narration: Infidel! attend, and read to your confuſion!

After preparing every thing for my departure, I trod with heavy ſtep the way I uſed to bound over ſo lightly when Hope had lent her wings; and watched at a little diſtance 'till I ſaw Mira leave the houſe, and walk towards the garden; then following, thanked my fortune that had in this at leaſt befriended me—ſhe was alone—Lord Sedley was not with her.

She ſeemed to tread in air—Animation glowed in all her form—but when ſhe ſaw me from that very ſeat where once I claſped her in my arms, a conſciouſneſs was mingled with the ſparkling pleaſure in her eye, which her ſituation with Lord Sedley too well accounted for: ſhe ſprung forward to meet me.

"Oh! Mr. Grandby! how long ſince we have ſeen you! how I have longed"—checked by a modeſt diffidence, a deep bluſh vermillioned her cheek as ſhe retired back, 'till obſerving my altered looks, alarm—compaſſion alone prevailed.

"But—good God! you look—you have been ill—quick, tell me what's the matter?"

A reception ſo different from what I expected, and in which ſuch anxious tenderneſs, nay fondneſs was conſpicuous; aſtoniſhed and overſet all my reſolution.—Ah! (whiſpered my heart) now ſhe is known to be another's, ſhe thinks herſelf at liberty to ſhow her friendſhip for me, without any danger of my miſtaking.

" Can any thing reſpecting me, give Miſs Eglington a moment's concern! Oh! Madam! make me not wiſh for health I can no longer enjoy."

" Concern me, Mr. Grandby! when you know"—(ſhe looked down).

" I know the goodneſs of your heart, and know it feels my diſtreſs: but I cannot bear that even your pity for me ſhould ſadden that happineſs, which wretched as I am, muſt gleam a ray of joy over my benighted fortune.

Lord, Mr. Grandby—how can you be ſo ſerious about that fooliſh dancing affair! but come—I am ſorry for all that paſſed that night—indeed you ſhall not longer be offended with me: had you known my reaſon"—Ah! (thought I) too well—too well I know it.

" Won't you forgive me?" and ſhe looked up in my face with ſuch bewitching ſweetneſs—Ah! who can deſcribe her manner!

" Oh! Heavens! forgive you! was I, could I ever be offended with you? Dear Innocence! you never injured me—'twas my own mad paſſion raiſed the hopes in the air that now

now cruſh me in their fall! Forgive me, that once more I offend your ears upon a ſubject I now know you muſt not liſten to—but I go—I leave you for ever—Oh! twas my boding heart when I laſt met you here.

" What are you talking of Mr. Grandby! go! for what? How you perplex—how you terrify.

" My Mira—(let me this once, this laſt time call you mine) how I have loved you, this aching boſom only knows: yet, though I bow to your decree in favour of another, I cannot ſtay to ſee you his—and come to take a laſt—I muſt not thus diſtreſs you: dear idol of my ſoul, farewell (dropping down on my knee, and ſobbing over her hand) Heaven bleſs—bleſs you for ever! and if beyond that, he can be bleſt, the man you love. Oh! God ſupport me—"—I tore myſelf away—Mira ſeemed petrified with aſtoniſhment; but as I turned to go, gave a loud ſcream that inſtantly recalled me: I caught her in my arms—and when I ſaw her pale—her eyes cloſed—Lifeleſs—how did I curſe the madneſs that would not let me leave her without this dreadful proof of her compaſſion.

Lovemore!—I was juſt going to preſs her cold lips, as her cheek reclined on my ſhoulder; when the keen recollection of their being the ſacred property of another ruſhed on my diſtracted mind.

She now opened her eyes, and raiſing her head from my boſom, with a voice of touching woe, exclaimed.

" Oh! Grandby! you ſay you love me—Why then will you leave me! Can I help Lord Sedley s paſſion?—but—but what do you mean! the man I love! I never loved" —Amazement ſeized my ſenſes!

" Not love Lord Sedley! Heavens! Why then do you conſent to be his?

" Be his! I never will—I never meant it —he is rejected; and did you—could you think I would!—Ah! Grandby!"

She dropped her bluſhing face into my boſom—as I ſnatched her yielding to my throbbing heart—the blood ruſhing to, and flying from it in ſuch impetuous tides as ſcarcely left me life.

Great God! what a change did this moment produce! I am aſtoniſhed at my powers to ſurvive the ſudden guſh of joy that ſucceeded the very depth of deſpair—for Lovemore, moved by the ſufferings my wild miſtake had cauſed, her lips confirmed the ſoft cofeſſion of her eyes; and owned—repetedly owned ſhe loved me! and Heavens! while the dear idea ſwims through my ſenſes can I have patience to write it! write it to you?—George—you are now repayed for that part of your letter, which, while I read, I thought impoſſible you ever could be.

" She

"She loved me." Do you think I did not impreſs the words on her lips as they roſe? thoſe lips that now my own, I dared to touch? to touch! George—now think me, call me mad—I will forgive you: Lovemore —I glory in my madneſs!

When the happy explanation took place, I found her aſſumed coldneſs alone owing to the fear of her duty's ſuffering by letting her heart too far engage itſelf, without the knowledge of her parents. Filial duty—Lovely virtue! and its obſervance, how ſweet a pledge of that faith ſhe'll ever keep with me. Amiable pair! how has their conduct to their daughter impreſſed their virtues deeper on my heart: and their partial approbation of me—Oh! what but my exceſs of love, of gratitude, can merit ſuch diſtinction! they too approve me! 'tis too much—all in one hour! 'twas more than my moſt ſanguine hopes had ever promiſed, for though I knew Miſs Eglington would never be mine without their conſent (nor would I even wiſh it) I feared much greater difficulty, than from their goodneſs, I had reaſon.

The lovely girl forbids my yet ſpeaking to them on this delightful ſubject: but when we went in, inſtead of pouring out my grateful aknowledgments at Lady Eglington's feet, as I wiſhed to do, I had only an opportunity of kiſſing her hand with an emotion that poorly expreſſed my feelings: her eyes gliſtened as

ſhe ſmiling aſked me, "had ſhe not reaſon to believe my fears were only painting ſhadows?"

Mrs. Boothby in a whiſper congratulated me on the recovery of my ſpeech: and added, had ſhe had any apprehenſions for me, ſhe would not have enjoyed my diſmals as ſhe did: nay, ſhe was once tempted to inſpire me à little, but thought it beſt to leave me to a more agreeable comforter. So ſhe (though juſt arrived) had found us out too. But Amelia Lovemore.

Amelia immediately came to complain to me of her ſiſter's ſtrange, ſilly, unaccountable behaviour—and in the ſame breath aſked me, if I could poſſibly account for it? but this in a manner that proved ſhe was at no loſs herſelf for the motive. I almoſt wiſh I had a coronet to amuſe this pretty baby with.

Sir Charles ſoon entered, followed by Lord Sedley—his reception of me (though a ſilent one) was equally affectionate with his Lady's: how flattering! and my Lord—when firſt I caſt my eyes on him, my heart was wrung with ſympathy: I could have wept on his neck, and the greateſt care was neceſſary to prevent his having the leaſt reaſon to perceive it. But how were my feelings turned into thoſe of wonder and admiration, when he advanced to me with a manly candour and freedom of addreſs, that evinced his ſuperiority of mind, as well as of every other advantage!—How different his behaviour from mine!

mine! but he had not loved ſo well—ſo long as I had—it had not grown the habit of his ſoul—yet I never had an idea of love in moderation—A Mira too. However, my better obſervation ſoon diſcovered it was noble generoſity alone that influenced Lord Sedley: he did not attempt to conceal his diſappointed love; every look, every word betrayed the ardour of his paſſion; till, ſeeming to fall into himſelf, his eyes dropped, and he afterwards continued in melancholy ſilence. Delicacy had made me forbear, as much as poſſible, any particular attention to Mira, and ſoon after tea, pleading an engagement, I took my leave.

Now Lovemore, I ſhall make no comments, but leave you to repentance, while I enjoy my renovated hopes! God knows, I want a little reſt—But imagine, though from a contrary cauſe, I ſhall ſtill court ſleep in vain. Yet I muſt try, for Mira, alarmed at my altered looks, (you would be aſtoniſhed to ſee what a figure this affair has made of me, George) bids me take care of myſelf; and after that will any care be neceſſary? Good night, Lovemore—Dear inconſiſtent, good night.—

GRANDBY.

One reflection, however, I muſt offer to your conſideration.

Suppoſe, Lovemore, the caſe as we at firſt apprehended, and I (that madman to expect the world muſt ever give way to me) becauſe

checked in my career, had been demon enough to wiſh to have deſtroyed that felicity, I could not myſelf enjoy. Suppoſe in a duel I had even eſcaped a plunge unbidden to eternity, and nobly proving my paſſion for Miſs Eglington, by ſtabbing her image in her lover's heart; my rival had fallen at my feet: would her hand have rewarded his brave aſſaſſin?

"No—but malice, revenge had been gratified." O glorious triumph over Sedley! plant daggers in the boſom of Mira!—reverſe the view—I provoke by language it would be unworthy a man to bear—a man to give—Lord Sedley to meet me: we fight—the miſtake comes out—my happineſs is for ever wounded in the death of the moſt amiable of men; or—dying, I curſe the raſhneſs that alone prevented the full completion of my wiſhes! and Mira—I cannot purſue the thought—yes—my paſſions are warm, are impetuous; but, Lovemore, I am not a ruffian.

LETTER XX.

Sir George Lovemore to Edmund Grandby, Eſq.

JOY to my Grandby! joy (and Heaven reward the generous girl) to the lovely Mira! yes—for her ſake I will believe there are women—a few women in the world I may be miſtaken in. As to her, I do repent me,

me, and you ſhall lead me to her feet, where for your ſake, ſhe will forgive me.

Your reflection (as you call it) worked oddly on me—'tis well enough after—but at the time—you are a hero Grandby: Sedley's a hero: and all I know is, I could not act like either of you.

Why what a little devil that Amelia to torment you ſo! I muſt ſee that girl: Edmund will you let me revenge you!

In truth, I want unbending a little; too much thinking will hurt me; and a woman (like a farce after a play) relieves the mind from reflection wonderfully.

I ſhould not have been ſo long in one place, but for buſineſs: thank my ſtars 'tis nearly accompliſhed, and then I ſtart.

But, Grandby, now I reflect—what have you done with that odd mortal your uncle? You ſay not a word of him—I hope in your heroics you do not forget how neceſſary the formality of his conſent is, though you were ever ſo happy without it. Remember he has not, any more than the reſt of the Nabob tribe, been in India for nothing; and you know (as my friend Careleſs ſays) "what a d—d diſinheriting look he has"—which would not be quite ſo convenient, my boy, tho' your eſtate improves ever ſo faſt. Here, however, he can have no objection, or the devil's in him again: yet as you know his humour, do not, I charge you, neglect him.

Why

Why cannot Miſs Eglington allow you to conclude the affair at once? I never like delays, and if ever I am caught in the marrying mood, adviſe my fair one to conſent in the firſt moment, leſt I repent me the next. Repentance I allow can never be your portion, for you are beyond the dangers of reflection! nor can your Mira be doubted: yet ſhe might tempt a hermit from his prayers, and every man is not a Sedley—ſo take my advice, and finiſh at once Grandby—invite me down on the day of your tranſlation, and if Amelia is ſaucy (as I hope ſhe will) leave me to manage her, for I ever will be—

Your friend—

LETTER XXI.

Miſs Amelia Eglington to Lady Priſcilla Blomer.

I AM ſorry, my dear Priſcilla, your eternal confinements render it equally impoſſible for you to amuſe yourſelf with realities, and me with their dilightful pictures. It is indeed very provoking; yet I am not ſo unreaſonable as to expect you to write when you can have nothing to ſay, which muſt certainly be the caſe, while ever you ſtay at home. This nothingneſs has kept me ſilent too, for what is this over and over again, but a mere nothing at laſt?

I am indeed, very unfortunate—for every ſcheme

ſcheme I have in view vaniſhes as ſoon as it appears: and here my fooliſh ſiſter has knocked the loveliеſt one in the head all of a ſudden—you ſhall hear—

Lord Sedley came on a viſit, and inſtantly fell in love with Mira— which was a proof of his poſſeſſing a little fire you know, if not of his taſte: you may judge how rejoyced I was, having reaſon to conclude ſo brilliant a lover would immediately alter her ſilly opinion of Grandby; and when ſhe was Lady Sedley, the firſt thing of courſe would be to go to town to ſhew her fine things, and ſo I ſhould go with her—and then there would be dreſſing, and viſiting, and preſenting, and every thing elſe a reaſonable creature could wiſh for. Now you will hardly think it credible—but it is a fact—ſhe has abſolutely refuſed, to be Lady Sedley (a counteſs when the old Peer dies) with immenſe ſettlements beſides! all—all without the leaſt reaſon in the world! So much for country education.

Perhaps, my Lady, you imagine Lord Sedley very old, or very ugly, or very religious? No ſuch thing—he is young, very handſome, and dances moſt divinely.

He is juſt ſetting off—by himſelf Priſcilla, when I expected we ſhould have formed ſuch a ſplendid train—with new equipages, liveries, &c. &c.—and inſtead of this, here I am yet. The town will ſoon begin to fill, and that will be more dreadful ſtill, for if any thing can make the not being there ſupportable,

able, it is when there's nobody in it: but when 'tis full—Oh! the very thought diſtracts me.

Only think of my mother—ſhe wanted to perſuade me that all who could do ſo, left London to enjoy themſelves at their country ſeats: but I know they abhor them, and fly the fineſt palaces, and delightful paradiſes, to crowd to little muddy fiſhing places, and ſtifling dirty lodgings, and all to be in the world. I muſt certainly hit upon ſomething ſoon, though my very imagination ſeems dulled by the place.

When Mrs. Boothby leaves us it will be worſe ſtill, for ſhe is my friend, and generally takes my part of the argument at firſt, though ſhe afterwards contrives ſome how or other to give it a turn, that ſets us all laughing.

But now I am ready to cry for vexation at my Lord Sedley's diſappoinment and mine. I am angry with my ſiſter for her folly, and with my father for humouring it, without ſaying a word to check her; though he is eternally preaching to me.

I have not patience to write a moment longer for reflection—till Sedley ſet off, I had ſome hopes they would repent, and be wiſe at laſt; but now it is all over, and Grandby—hang him—I ſhall hate him more than ever for being the cauſe of ſo mortifying an affliction.

My compliments to the few yet in town. Dear Priſcilla—your ever wretched

AMELIA.

LET-

LETTER XXII.

Lady Priſcilla Blomer to Miſs A. Eglington.

I HAVE not patience with your continual complaints Amelia—when, had you one ſpark of reſolution only (for you do not want ſenſe) you might by chuſing one from the crowd of admirers you left behind you, immediately be your own miſtreſs, take your fortune into your own hands, and ever after do as you pleaſed.

The ſingle point is how to get to town: eaſy enough—not indeed by complainings, and implorings, for what will they avail with thoſe who have not ſenſe to comprehend your wrongs? Frighten them then into your meaſures: threaten them with marrying ſome one whom you think they will moſt object to, unleſs inſtantly permitted to pay me a viſit. When once from your tormenting goalers, leave your future liberty to me-

Amazing! with your independant fortune to be ſo reſtrained—I wonder at their conſcience.

I expected every moment to hear you had adopted ſome ſuch plan—you muſt be *dull* indeed, ſince this ſo plain, ſo ſimple, ſo natural has not once occurred to you. Now do not loſe time Amelia, but put this in immediate execution; you will ſoon ſee the effect, depend upon it.

Nothing

Nothing of what your ſiſter has done can ſurpriſe me: for how ſhould it be expected with a perſon ſo confined, her mind could be enlarged? Do not men travel for improvement; and do not we daily obſerve that thoſe are moſt accompliſhed who have ſeen moſt life, and who return with feweſt of thoſe wretched narrow prejudices they carry from this dull clime? Attend the difference—

They go like ſtupid, clumſy clowns, their heads ſtuffed with univerſity lumber, and their minds with heavy thought, ruſtic honeſty, and with a ſtubborn ill-bred partiality for their own country—but when once they breathe the ton-inſpiring air of Italy and France; behold a wonder! the gentleman ſucceeds—and all thoſe ſolid, torpid notions quick refine to laughing wit, free ſpirit, ſmiling mein, the ſweet deluſive air and light idea: with an improved taſte to deſpiſe whatever they find at home, and to prefer all other countries to their own. I own there are exceptions, and that here and there we meet a rugged block that will not admit a poliſh; but thanks to better breeding, they are not very frequent, and daily will be leſs ſo, till time—a very little time ſhall have humanized the whole.

And, after this, ſhall the confined prejudices of a poor, untutored country girl aſtoniſh? Amelia—'tis London is the travelling and for women, and the greater the diſ-

tance

tance from the capital, the leſs the chance for improvement. Juſt as we ſee with faſhions —the further we go, the more *outre*, and prepoſterous the dreſſes.

Who but a Mira would have betrayed ſuch weak ſimplicity! Why diſcard Lord Sedley becauſe ſhe prefered Mr Grandby? when one might have been a huſband, the other a Ciciſbeo as in countries more polite? Lord, child—Have you never read Lord Cheſterfield?

What ideas muſt your mother have! A country ſeat throws me into the vapours whenever I think of one: we had but one ſcene of altercation during the whole of the watering ſeaſon—I died to go to Brighton, Scarborough, and fifty other places, but on pretence of fatigue, was fatigued to death with refuſals: 'twas only fear of my being engaged in continual diſſipation, for (obſerve the conſiſtency) they wanted to carry me (Heaven knows where) down to the ſeat in Wales—No, no—I wou'd not be buried quite, and prefer'd even an empty town, to ſhades and groves, with bubbles and Blomer murmuring by my ſide.

I ſhould not find my confinement half ſo inſupportable (thank Heaven 'twill ſoon be over) but for this trifling fellow: for I could amuſe myſelf well enough with inventing new caps and trimmings for future happy days: but his continual haunting interrupts a thouſand brilliant thoughts, and great deſigns.

I ſhall

I ſhall never forgive him the loſs of one this morning—I had been three hours planning the ſweeteſt dreſs—The train was to be Circaſſian and azure—the body French and vermillion—the ſleeves Italian and violet—and the trimmings—Oh! the trimmings! they were one gay aſſemblage of all ſorts of things, and of all manner of colours! foils, French beads—and feathers: fringe, foliage, wreaths, and peacocks tails mingled and ſtrayed in beautiful confuſion, while dangling taſſels elegantly ſwam on every ſide in light relief, as they ſuſtain'd the gay feſtoons: and lo! this unlucky man demoliſh'd the whole idea ere 'twas well form'd in fancy's floating loom! was it not provoking?

He really grows worſe inſtead of tiring, and is ever on the hunt for ſome new folly to diſguſt me more. What do you think his whimſical brain has hit upon now? He will have it, that when I am a mother, all my preſent gay purſuits will yield to thoſe of love and tenderneſs: for that my child will make an intereſt for him in my heart, and will not only plead in its own, but in its father's favour—and with this idea he is continually diverting himſelf.

Had he ſtopp'd here I had only laugh'd, but—I am almoſt aſhamed to expoſe him—wou'd you think it poſſible, Amelia! the ſtrange mortal wanted to perſuade me to be a—nurſe as well as mother—but when he

ſaw

ſaw me falling into fits (I really thought him mad) he was frighten'd into ſilence, and has never dared to think of it ſince. The wretch!

Adieu! 'till I embrace you in town. Make haſte for all the world's beginning to move.

LETTER XXIII.

Miſs Eglington to Lady Helena Melcome.

HELENA—what do you think was the cauſe of Grandby's long abſence? Oh! he believed I favoured Lord Sedley—what a thought! that all the affection which had been ſo long growing in my heart for him, ſhould in a moment be torn up, and a new one planted there!

I now comprehend the whole of his meaning on that evening—Generous Grandby! 'twas well for me I did not know his ſuſpicion, or I fear I could not have purſued the path that duty pointed out, and which that I did purſue, now proves the pureſt ſource of my felicity.

You know not, Helena, how he ſuffered—Oh! how he looked 'till undeceived! and then—the emotions varying on his features as they ſucceeded thoſe of the deſpair, which, 'till now, had almoſt ſunk him—Do you not think I haſtened to relieve him, by own-

owning all my heart? And what a ſweet reward his praiſe—for I told him all my motive, now there was no longer reaſon for concealment.

Yet not unmixed the cup of joy in this world—I had wiſhed to Grandby he would not juſt now aſk the permiſſion of my father had promiſed to give him when referr'd to; for I knew the anxiety his dear paternal boſom felt (however he tries to conceal it) for my ſiſter's diſcontented ſituation: he is now greatly diſturbed on her account. Amelia has informed Mrs. Boothby of a letter ſhe has juſt received from Lord —— whoſe principles are ſuch as make us tremble leaſt ſhe ſhou'd encourage his pretenſions: for though ſhe did not at firſt do ſo, on this renewal of his addreſs, ſhe throws out hints that terrify.

Though, as a guardian, her father cannot controul her choice, as a parent he has the power: but if ſhe is determined on oppoſing him, what, but ſuch violent proceedings as confinement (which his generous ſoul abhors, and may be at laſt eluded) can he now have recourſe to? Perſuaſion, and every gentle method has been already try'd in vain.

Helena—how has ſhe the heart—when I ſee the tears I cannot wipe away—a reſentment never felt 'till now ariſes in my boſom, which all my endeavours can ſcarcely ſuppreſs.

preſs. And while my heart thus bleeds for them, can I indulge—No, no; even Grandby muſt yield to this.

Mrs. Boothby immediately informed my mother of all ſhe had learned from Amelia, and adviſes by no means to provoke her, as from the lightneſs of her mind ſhe might precipitate herſelf in woes, ſhe only laughs at now, while held out to her reflection, and which ſhe calls "the gloomy phantoms of a cloiſtered imagination."

Mrs. Boothby is at this moment engaged on this perplexing ſubject with my father, and the loved companion of her youth whoſe ſorrows ſhe ever ſenſibly feels. I am certain her wiſh (however well intended) to have Amelia indulged in going to town, will never be attended to, for her parents declare they cannot anſwer to themſelves the expoſing her (ſo far from their protection) to the conſequences that may be apprehended from her being left to her own diſcretion: or worſe, to that of Lady Priſcilla Blomer, whoſe love of pleaſure and diſſipation even exceeds hers.—

* * * *

I was interrupted by a meſſage to attend the reſult of the conſultation, when my opinion was aſked, and my aſſiſtance required, by thoſe who ought to ſway the one, and have a right to command the other.

And

And yet it is a hard requeſt Helena—and I feel it preſſing at my heart: juſt when—But away every ſelfiſh conſideration—you ſhall inſtantly give way to the repoſe of a parent, the happineſs of a ſiſter, the wiſhes of a friend. Yet my Grandby—what will he—Helena—they want me to leave him, and acompany my ſiſter to London: to leave the paternal arms that have hitherto encircled my youth; the maternal boſom where I ever repoſed in peace—for a life I wiſh not to know, for pleaſures which I cannot enjoy.

Mrs. Boothby, whoſe kind intereſt in our happineſs or griefs, can only be equalled by the gratitude it inſpires, has begged to be allowed to invite my ſiſter to paſs the winter with her in town; adding, however, ſhe wiſhed for my company too; ſhe was afraid (even though ſhe could obtain her friend's conſent to parting with us both) I would not forgive her making the requeſt at ſuch a time. Yet, could I poſſibly comply, ſhe would be far more at eaſe, for my influence with my ſiſter would, if neceſſary, be more effectual than any ſhe could exert with propriety. What influence have I Helena! None: yet as my mother took my hand, and aſked—"Mira can you oblige us?" What could I do but inſtantly conſent?

I do not like this buſineſs—yet it ſeems it is the beſt alternative the ſituation of things

things allows. I wonder at Mrs. Boothby's courage: though ſhe does not mean to take (nor could it be expected) the leaſt reſponſibility on herſelf, but only offers this as a far more eligible plan than that Amelia propoſed of going alone to Lady Priſcilla: promiſing, on that condition, again to reject Lord ———.

My ſiſter was all extacy—loaded me with careſſes for my ready compliance—and promiſed to reward my goodneſs by ſhewing me a thouſand, thouſand wonders. My father, however, would not yield to her going to town at all, till ſhe gave him her word never to enter into any engagement without his approbation.

And now every thing is ſettled—preparations are already making for our departure from—where is my Edmund? How ſhall we—I cannot proceed for my tears—they mix with my ink—my heart ſinks—Helena, adieu.

LETTER XXIV.

Miſs A. Eglington to Lady Priſcilla Bloomer.

PRISCILLA, I am going—actually going—What an angel you are, Priſcilla! and what do I not owe you?

Lord

Lord —— never did ſuch execution in his life—he frightened them to death, and though I hate him like a witch for his ugly face, I almoſt adore him for his character! who ſays, Priſcilla, a bad character is good for nothing? Oh! 'twas the divineſt thought (what could poſſeſs me not to hit on it myſelf) it took like a train of gunpowder—yet not quite the way we expected—I am not to be with you—that is, not an inmate, but we ſhall be inſeparables notwithſtanding.

Oh! immerſed in my own affairs, I forgot to give you joy, my Lady, on the birth of your daughter—well, Blomer will have no excuſe for keeping you at home now, nor can he grumble at your leaving him ſo often, for mean time he may amuſe himſelf with nurſing the child, ſince he likes the idea ſo; and I adviſe you to let him keep it at home for that very purpoſe.

I long to ſee your ſitting-up dreſs—white ſattin and Bruſſels—charming. Apropos—what a ſin to have your whole dreſs pulled to pieces by that unthinking wretch, while the light idea fluttered through your brain—Taſte preſiding at your ſide, and Fancy hovering over your head as your deſigned! both, both put to immediate flight in one moment—I do not wonder though, for Blomer has

has ſuch a natural antipathy to thoſe charming divinities, he is enough to frighten them away wherever he appears. Yet one would imagine too, he felt their influence when he married you: but it was pure ſpite to teaze them ever after in your perſon. La! Priſcilla—I have not had ſuch a thought ſince buried in clover: this going to town makes me all myſelf again. Thus encouraged, while things are preparing, I will, like you, beguile the tedious hours, by aſſiſting you to gather up the ſcattered remains of your poor trimmings, and have already ſome additions in agitation that will be vaſt improvements: as ſteel for inſtance—you abſolutely forgot ſteel, Priſcilla—How could you be ſo careleſs? I admire it of all things—it has ſuch a light effect.

But I will not tell you a word of my new invented foil—no, I'll ſurprize you with that when we meet, and it would take up a ſheet of paper to deſcribe it, it is ſo truly elegant for its ſweet ſimplicity.

Now don't be wicked my Lady—and by foil imagine I mean my ſiſter—no, no; for though ſhe is inanimate, and wants the ſwimming air, the careleſs toſs, the bewitching ſtare; ſhe is quite as handſome as I am, and a few nights in public will give her all the reſt.

Now I recollect—you could not have miſtaken me, for I did not mention my ſiſter's accompanying me before: yes, Priſcilla, they ſend her by way of guardian to me: I will

return the compliment, and take ſuch pains (for with all her faults I really love her) to introduce her to all the pretty fellows of the ton, that poor Grandby ſhall be ſoon ſet afloat.

We are to be with Mrs. Boothby, who is not much out of the way, and ſees vaſt crowds of company. You will laugh—my father made me firſt promiſe not to marry without his conſent: La! I can ſay I was in love, you know, and that will be a good excuſe for any thing.

How very juſt your notions of travelling—my own obſervations exactly—how elegantly you think—how elegantly you write—yet one thing I do not—perhaps I am miſtaken—but—but I do not much approve the Ciciſbeo plan, for though I ſee no reaſon in the world for a woman's loving her huſband, I do not think ſhe ſhould prefer another. But you will believe I am imbibing country ideas—indeed were it not for ſhame and reſolution, I fear I ſhould be ſometimes in danger, from example: and then, there is ſomething after all in natural affection—though to be ſure 'tis ſo ridiculous to give way to it: 'tis lucky however my ſtay has not been very long, for I might in time be abſolutely ſpoiled. Don't laugh at me Priſcilla—nor be too apprehenſive: if this groſs air has done me any harm, your Ladyſhip's converſation will, in one hour, again refine me.

Hark! I hear Grandby—he will be in the pouts again, and fear a thouſand Sedleys. I

muſt

muſt fly and help to give him reaſon—I do love to ſee his fine eyes gliſten, and his cheek glow with apprehenſion; and am juſt in proper humour to torment others, now I am ſo happy myſelf. Pricilla, prepare to embrace and congratulate your enraptured.

AMELIA.

LETTER XXV.

Mr. Grandby to Sir George Lovemore.

AN envious ſhade withdraws the ſun of happineſs, that late has ſhone with ſuch ſweet influence on my hours—but it will not ſet for ever—'twill only diſappear to gladden others for a while, and then riſe for me again.

She is going Lovemore—going far from me—and how ſhall I ſupport my Mira's abſence? Heavens! how have the downy moments glided on ſince that which promiſed her to my wiſhes! The world was diſappearing from my view, I knew no pain but when I left her, and in the interval lived on the paſt. But now—ſo long away—no, no; I will ſoon follow.

The fooliſh Amelia—'tis on her account my lovely girl muſt leave me, though (as ſhe ſweetly owns) her heart will not permit her (while from her Grandby) to enjoy either London or its pleaſures.

What do you mean George by thus joining with Amelia, to torture me with apprehenſions of what may happen, and that even before you knew of this journey? Sure it cannot make a change in Mira—yet—the moment ſhe appears, each heart—away: if Sedley could not prevail, what can I have to fear? But ſhe has hitherto been a ſtranger to thoſe alluring fields of pleaſure, through which a woman can ſcarcely range without a wiſh for the glowing flowers that diſſipation and vanity preſent on every ſide. Perhaps too when ſurrounded by ſuperior excellence, Grandby may pleaſe no longer: well—ought I not rather to rejoice at the trial; for would I poſſeſs her hand (Heavens)! were her heart devoted to another: but her love is already pledged to me—ſhe cannot if ſhe would—pledged! and would I then take advantage—whither am I led! Oh! happineſs! at beſt imperfect good, when even thy ſweeteſt drops are tinged with bitterneſs—and now—each dear "I love you" that lately hung on my faſcinated ears, and vibirated on my heart-ſtrings, may, by the generous erring girl, be deemed a tie with which honour binds her wiſhes. Let me fly quickly—diſſolve the bond, and leave her as free as air. No, Lovemore—I will inſiſt—but I've no time to loſe.

* * *

How different this woman from moſt of the ſex—I was under ſome difficulty, and ſcarcely knew

knew how to introduce the ſubject I came upon, for many would have been offended at the leaſt doubt of their conſtancy or truth. Mira perceived, and relieved my embarraſſment.

"I underſtand you Mr. Grandby—be under no apprehenſion, for could any change in my ſentiments poſſibly take place, I ſhould believe I injured you far more by perſiſting through a falſe delicacy, a miſtaken generoſity, than by candidly owning the error of my heart, and retracting: for could a worthleſs, lifeleſs hand merit a love like yours! no, however unworthy your affection, I would not by deception make you but more unhappy, and forego all claim to your eſteem. This is the very ſubject I wiſh to enter on with you, ſince you declare you mean to follow me to town. Mr. Grandby—promiſe ere you meet me there, that ſhould a dearer affection prove you had miſtaken that you felt for me—promiſe you will not let a falſe point of honour impede the truly generous faith you owe me: for oh! believe me, Grandby—I had rather, far rather, you would at the very alter nobly fly me, than by offering a repugnant hand—Huſh Grandby, no vows; vows 'twould be a greater crime to keep than violate. Heaven knows! I do not doubt your love, but would guard only againſt the miſtakes of a heart whoſe warmth alone could lead it into error."

Why, Lovemore, ſhould I be ſo differently affected at the idea of ſuch a poſſibility?

Mira was not angry when I began the ſubject, but I could not bear it, and would ſcarce allow her to proceed. I felt affronted—and could have quarrelled even with her for daring to harbour a doubt of the love ſhe raiſed. I could not conquer the whole evening (tho' the laſt) the gloomy reſerve her ſtrange ſuppoſition cauſed: my ſullen eye ſtill dropped whenever it met hers, till her inſinuating ſmiles made me half aſhamed of my childiſh, perverſe behaviour. But when we parted—(they ſet off to morrow, and I might not have ſuch another opportunity to bid her adieu) when ſhe wept on my boſom as I folded her in my arms—no, George—ſhe never, never will love another.

Mrs. Boothby honoured me with an invitation as friendly as polite, of which immediately availing myſelf, I aſked, and obtained Sir Charles's permiſſion to follow. Yet my heart is wondrous heavy! why wondrous? when ſome ſickly ſuns muſt riſe and ſet, ere I again behold my Mira!

* * *

She is gone, Lovemore—and my own ſorrows have till now been ſuſpended by the parting ſcene between the lovely twins (for even Amelia was affected) and their weeping parents. I know not how Sir Charles will live without his Mira: even his Lady's tenderneſs ſeem here to yield to the more animated affection of her almoſt adoring father.

I ſhall

I ſhall not for ſome days be able to ſet off for London, for beſide other buſineſs, I muſt not longer defer paying my uncle a viſit on this occaſion, who, as uſual, will not be ſoon inclined to part with me. I have not, as you obſerve, any reaſon to fear his objection, but duty and inclination (intereſt out of the queſtion) equally prompt me to ſhew him that reſpect you need not apprehend my omitting.

Every tender ſentiment in nature ought to lead me into Oxfordſhire, and the chance of meeting you there would be an additional motive to my taking it in my way: yet the delay ſuch a round would occaſion—and then to what ſhould I impute the long ſilence—I feel uneaſy myſelf George—and what could I ſay to the poor Sophia? Oh! ſhould ſhe hear—but I will not anticipate.

Adieu: I am at preſent unfit for every thing—even writing to you is irkſome to me.

LETTER XXVI.

Miſs Eglington to Lady Helena Melcome.

FROM London, the pride of cities; queen of arts, the mart of commerce, the boaſt of freedom, I now addreſs my Helena!

Oh! what a conflict to leave the tranquil ſhades where my happy infancy was reared!

where, from its earlieſt thought, I daily imbibed ſome virtuous precept from lips that ſeconded but what example taught; and where I firſt ſaw, and was beloved by Grandby!

When from the laſt hill that would give me a farewel look, I bid adieu to the dear ſcenes of domeſtic happineſs and peace; where all I valued moſt remained—it ſeemed as if life itſelf was ſhutting from my view—'twas early dawn, and parting night yet left its trailing ſhadows on the vallies that anſwered well the glooms of my ſad boſom, and as the ſounds from below died away from my bending ear, they ſtruck the deeper on my heart: but when I thought them loſt for ever, the clock ſtruck—and its deep tones reaching the chariot as it flew, I ſtarted—and involuntarily leaned forward as catching ſomething that yet remained.

How dear, Helena—how intereſting trifles become when all that is left us! No—they are then no longer trifles, ſince by giving us back ſome dear remembrance, they ſeem a part of the loved objects that ſtamp on them a real value. A flower remained in my habit—Grandby had gathered it the day before—'twas faded—but think you, I therefore toſſed it from me? No, I preſſed it to my heart, my lips, as fancy inhaled its vaniſhed ſweets—At leaſt Grandby had touched, had ſmelled, had placed it there—and I would not have changed its drooping leaves for the immortal

immortal branch Æneas plucked. Let not ſtern Reaſon laugh, or chide, Helena—That cannot be folly which yields us a delight we may with innocence enjoy, and who can ſnatch a pleaſure from imagination, will beſt deſerve the real bleſſings Heaven beſtows on life.

After freely paying to nature that tender tribute of tears ſhe ſhould never be controlled in; I compoſed myſelf, and determined to enjoy the good I ſtill poſſeſſed: or, at leaſt, without allowing the melancholy I could not wholly conquer, to ſadden the pleaſures of thoſe for whoſe ſatisfaction I had reſigned the cloſeſt intereſts of my heart. As we advanced, my thoughts were more and more engaged by the ſurrounding ſcenes: the animated pictures each country preſented as we paſſed, glowing with the richeſt verdure, and all the advantages which returning peace ſoon ſhowers around; threw a delightful calm over my mind, while it received a kind of pleaſure from the recollecting of the events each new and intereſting object gave riſe to. Here, a famous battle was fought—There, a celebra warrior had been defeated, or had gained immortal honours, and in this field, liberty ſtruggled in vain to vindicate her injured rights, or had riſen triumphant o'er oppreſſion's power!

When near the capital we met their Majeſties driving to Windſor: I thought it a ſingular piece of good fortune on the very hour

of my arrival to ſee (though only for a ſingle moment) the Sovereigns I had never yet beheld, though bleſſed in being born their ſubject. Affection, and a ſenſation of the moſt lively gratitude that ſeemed to draw and attach me to them—as I were theirs, prevailed, notwithſtanding the awful reſpect they inſpired—my heart filled, and bleſſed them as they paſſed—while it felt raiſed by a pride and importance unknown before; and had I poſſeſſed a thouſand lives, I think I could, with tranſport, have laid them at their feet. The light-horſe too had a grand effect, as well as the firſt entrance into this imperial city. Novice as I am, Helena (notwithſtanding the pretty juſt ideas I had formed from books and converſation) it is not ſurpriſing every thing ſhould ſtrike upon an imagination lively as mine, and ever ready to receive the moſt pleaſing impreſſions from the new objects hourly preſenting themſelves before me. I will enjoy them all— they will not laſt long—repetition will by degrees wear away the pleaſing effects novelty produces, for with wonder I obſerved the compoſure—the indifference with which the crowds paſſed along, while I was ready to jump out of the coach.

And yet—after my mind has been thus ſuſpended, recollection in one moment daſhes it back, it miſſes ſomething—my friends—my Grandby—nothing can long fill the void they leave.

We received on our arrival in Groſvenor-

Square

Square a moſt joyous reception from Mr. Boothby and the charming little Emma. Amelia all extacy (extacy with ſcarce a draw-back to check its wild career) ſoon flew to Lady Priſcilla: while I retired to enjoy all I could of the ſeveral treaſures of my heart, by writing, as duty, friendſhip,

——————" *Love inſpires,*
" *Warm from the heart, and faithful to its fires.*"

An additional motive increaſes the regret I feel on the relapſe, my dear Lady Melcome has had after the benefit ſhe at firſt experienced from the Bath waters: I hoped from the hours your ſo kindly promiſed on your return to devote to Eglington-Hall, a ſweet relief to the ſolitude my beloved parents muſt now experience. What will they do when Grandby leaves them too?—I almoſt wiſh—but minds like theirs bid defiance to the feelings that would militate againſt either the happineſs, or pleaſures of thoſe they love Oh! may I, by emulating, better deſerve their goodneſs! M. EGLINGTON.

LETTER XXVII.

(Miſs Eglington, in Continuation.)

I HAVE not yet been abroad: Mrs. Boothby is ſtill engaged in receiving crowds of viſitors. In theſe what a ſameneſs, Helena—

A painter

A painter may, indeed, diſcriminate their features where nature did the work, for ſhe is all variety: but their manners ſeem plaiſtered by the hand of art into one form from which they ſeldom vary: in vain may we ſeek for information from the ruling paſſion to which the great Poet ſuppoſes the leſſer ſtreams of the mind muſt ultimately tend, however they ſtray for a while. I fancy the generality of thoſe I have converſed with are all philoſophers, and have their paſſions under ſuch abſolute control, that none are rulers, but follow and obey where (not truth or reaſon, but) mode and cuſtom lead. True, from this general ſyſtem extend ſome branches of a more peculiar caſt, under which (like boys in a certain claſs) each individual may be ranged; but this affords not the mind that delightful field of perpetual entertainment that may be followed through nature's ever varying productions: for thoſe few leading ſhoots once inveſtigated, each ſprig but reflects the form from which it muſt not preſume to deviate. They dare not think for themſelves, Helena—but their opinions and manners like their dreſs, are intirely regulated by the leading taſte of a few faſhionable critics.

I was making my obſervations the other evening on a new publication, from which I had derived both pleaſure and inſtruction: as the company had delivered their opinions

freely

freely on other authors, I could not comprehend the reaſon of the general ſilence on this: nor why I was regarded with looks of aſtoniſhment as I ſpoke.

" May I aſk your opinion, Sir," (addreſſing myſelf to a gentleman next me, who hitherto had ſpoken deciſively) enough.

" Why really, Madam, I—I dare not—I have not the courage to—to ſet up—I cannot yet—But if in a few days you will allow me the honour, I'll do myſelf the pleaſure of waiting on you with my ſentiments, for then, I may preſume they may be of ſome ſervice in correcting your's."—I ſtared.—

" Pardon me, Sir: I underſtood you had already read the book."

" Yes,—O yes,—I have read it."

" O then you are only cautious, Sir, of what you ſay, 'till you have repeatedly read, and examined every part, leſt you ſhould too freely praiſe: I am happier; ſince for one beauty, I can eaſily forgive a dozen trifling blemiſhes."

" No, Madam: I can ſcarcely find time to run over an author once. But you are rather haſty: the book is but juſt out—its fate is not yet decided, and I have not yet learned either the general reception it meets with nor the particular one from thoſe on whoſe taſte I may depend." I could ſcarcely forbear laughing.

" After ſuch weighty reaſons, you will think me impertinent: but, Sir, were you leſs modeſt,

modeſt, or had already received your licence, would the book meet your approbation?"

"Were I at liberty I ſhould certainly have the honour of coinciding with you, for the book (and he whiſpered ſtill lower) the book has undoubted merit."—Helena, he came the next morning almoſt breathleſs, with haſte to intreat me, for heaven's ſake, not to divulge the immature opinion he had incautiouſly, though in ſtrict confidence ventured: promiſing on his part the moſt faithful ſecrecy in return. The book for certain reaſons was diſapproved of by a few, and would be of courſe (though unread) condemned by all. "No wonder, now he conſidered further, it was a worthleſs production:—Poor traſh indeed!"

By ſuch adequate and impartial connoiſſeurs, Helena, are the beſt authors often ſentenced: and on the vapouriſh breath of their wretched imitators, is that fame blown away, which after ages may perhaps reſtore them. Few have ſenſe to judge, and fewer ſtill have candor to aſſert their judgment againſt ſuch tides of prejudice and folly.

* * * *

This has been a moſt charming evening, for it has given me in Lady Elmour an acquaintance I ſhall truly value. To ſee her and admire is the ſame thing: ſhe commands the graces with an eaſe that makes them all her own, and her exquiſite beauty but renders the more intereſting the goodneſs and

ſincerity

ſincerity that beam through her artleſs features. Praiſe from ſuch characters was ever grateful to me, but it never fell more ſweetly than from the lips of my Lady Elmour.

Her Lord is a diſtant relation of Mrs. Boothby's, from whom I learn ſhe unites with the moſt elegant taſte for dreſs, and public amuſements, a refined underſtanding and benevolence of heart; and is in her domeſtic (particularly her maternal character) a perfect pattern.

Helena—Is it poſſible? Lord Elmour, not only an accompliſhed young nobleman, but a man of ſenſe: Lord Elmour wanders from this delightful bower of happineſs and peace, that ſpreads in vain for him the moſt luxuriant ſweets, to ſeek in the wild and thorny fields of diſſipation, the blaſted weeds he muſt deſpiſe! And ſtranger ſtill! While the ſingle glance of virtue inſtantly daſhes the riſing ſigh his conduct might otherwiſe raiſe to daring hope; he is violently jealous of the very woman he neglects, and muſt know to be beyond the reach of danger! That ſome when they truly love may be tenacious of every look or ſmile, I can conceive; but Lord Elmour is a paradox beyond my powers to reconcile. It cannot be owing to his ſelfiſh honor, for that is ſafe—perhaps a ſpark of love unknown even to himſelf—Ah, no!—It could not be concealed—yet diſſipation might ſmother for a while—or faſhion that tries

(and

(and often ſucceeds o'er ſenſe as well as folly) to ridicule, and turn each virtue into ſhame —Strange inconſiſtent world! I know not what to make of you.

His Lady too—How few women could act as ſhe does?—Though ſhe loves, tenderly loves him, and attempts not to conceal her affection; however ſhe feels his behaviour, ſhe never diſcovers the leaſt ſign of uneaſineſs, but is all gaiety and life, and ſeems the happieſt of women!

Amelia is ever with Lady Priſcilla Blomer, to whom ſhe is to introduce us as ſoon as ſhe goes abroad.

Our future mornings are to be taken up with ſeeing *every thing*, and our evenings with viſits—routs—public places—Helena, what a life! yet I am not averſe to making the moſt of the opportunities this winter yields me: my heart like a wandering dove will but more ſweetly reſt after its tiring flight, on the downy neſt of domeſtic tranquillity and love.

And not one word of Grandby? Yes, yes Helena—I am quite forgetting Grandby—The far-fetched ſighs, and bold diſconcerting looks that mean to diſtinguiſh me, will certainly endanger the artleſs heart-felt paſſion that modeſty without a bluſh could bear!—And then—to be ſure I never retire, and wear away diſguſt by reading again and again the dear letters I receive! While the withered flower in my boſom—Helena—check me—check the pen that will run away with me whenever

whenever it touches a ſubject over which I have—over which I wiſh to have no command.

LETTER XVIII.

Lady Helena Melcome to Miſs Eglington.

MIRA, one of the ſubjects of your laſt letter has reached a ſtring of my heart, that ſtrikes diſcord whenever 'tis touched.

You thought you knew me: that you had diſcovered, and eradicated the only fault your partial eye could ſee—Ah! my friend: it was only checked by your preſence, for no ſooner withdrawn from your correcting frown (for I almoſt fear as well as love you) than that daſh of coquetry you took ſuch pains to make me aſhamed of, would now and then peep out, and ſport itſelf with the pretty glittering toys of darts and daggers, which the folly of thoſe ſimpletons called lovers, would continually throw in my way. Well—'tis come home to me now—And I fear one of thoſe ſhining edged tools has cut my finger at laſt, when I only thought innocently to play with it. Yet this is not the worſt—the wound has thrown out a lurking diſorder in my nature hitherto concealed, and which may cloud (if not deſtroy) every blooming proſpect of my life. And now—thou dear phyſician of my follies:

follies: what am I now to do? for if to be "tenacious of every look, of every ſmile" is indeed a ſign of a jealous love (Oh! the ugly "green-eyed monſter?" how it frightens me!) the Lord have mercy on your poor Helena—for it is all over with her ſhe verily believes. But, Mira, may it not be only vanity—Yes, yes: 'tis only vanity—not jealouſy—but offended vanity, that cannot bear to part with any of its tributes. Well—now here is ſome hopes, I may have patience to impart my caſe. —Alas! how I trifle with the throbs of my heart! Mira, I am not happy!—Butto my ſubject.

After amuſing myſelf a little with the nonſenſicals of two or three idle fellows who had nothing to do at Bath but divert me; I intended to puniſh Sir William Barville a little for thinking proper to add his name to my liſt, ſo ſuddenly—as if becauſe he was pleaſed with my face, he could diſpenſe with every other merit.—In vain—I never ſucceeded in putting him out of humour, but I was more ſo myſelf: if I aimed at raillery, my wit was heavy as the affected attempts of a prime miniſter after loſing a queſtion; but if we quarrelled, and I drove him away—he might never return—and if he did not immediately, my ſickly imagination repreſented him as loſt for ever—Worſe, fifty times worſe—he was certainly detained by ſuperior, or leſs capricious charms.

So far Mira you will not much pity me: I had the remedy in my own power: I was not quite

quite an idiot—Sir William was not diſcouraged—My mother approved—yet—yet I was not—never can be happy: for I now diſcovered the ruling paſſion of my ſoul—its every fibre to be formed of jealouſy: the phantom haunts me wherever I turn, and in vain would I endeavour to ſubdue the fault of nature. If Sir William but praiſes a cap—but picks up a fan—Mira deſpiſe me not—yet you muſt—I deſpiſe myſelf—And ought I, with this low, with this deſpicable weakneſs ever to think of marrying? For if ideal ſhadows have power to make me thus miſerable, Heavens! ſhould an Elmour—let me breathe a moment—

* * * *

I do not attempt, I would not wiſh to conceal my foible—Foible! How weak a veil for a vice! Sir William ſees it, it ſeems grateful to his heart—He does not indeed appear to triumph, but his eyes dance with pleaſure at ſo glaring a proof of my attachment. But Mira will it be always ſo? Will not diſguſt—Ah! my friend? I ſee the gulph of wretchedneſs opening before me, and if ever I marry I plunge into the midſt.

At times I think Barville cannot love me ſincerely, for he ſhows no uneaſineſs at my attention to others. Is he then ſo indifferent? or ſo ſecure—Ha!—Oh Mira! Was there ever ſo capricious a temper as mine!—Yet let me be at leaſt ſincere—Yes: I ſhould be happy

happy to ſee him equally alive to the apprehenſions of a real affection: ah! who would not eaſily forgive the doubts by trembling love inſpired!

* * * *

Well may you exclaim, "ſtrange inconſiſtent world!—A world where we daily ſee thoſe whom nature diſtinguiſhed as ſuperior beings, delighting to mingle with her common herd. That the weak, the vain ſhould ſtill walk in the fields of folly, where faſhion ever leads the way, is not in the leaſt ſurpriſing, for theſe are their proper walks; but that the wiſe and good ſhould leave their happier tracks, only becauſe leſs beaten, and follow while they condemn; is what patience herſelf muſt frown, and even dulneſs ſtart at.

Mr. Townly, with every advantage nature and education could beſtow, has alſo imbibed a tinge of the times.—He is juſt arrived at Bath, to meet a young lady hourly expected from the country, whom his father has choſen for his wife. He joined us this morning in the rooms, when Sir William (his intimate acquaintance) introduced him to me.

"Is the report I hear a true one, Tom? "Have you really conſented to unite yourſelf "for ever to a woman you never beheld?"

"Is there any thing extraordinary in that "Sir William? It is a thing that happens "every day."

"It does ſo too often I allow you, and "hence its conſequent woes. But with ſo much

" much ſentiment, ſo much refinement as " you poſſeſs"—

" On every other ſubject Barville I might " thank you for the complment: but here I " beg to be excuſed! for heaven defend me " from ever being married to a woman I " either love, or am beloved by!"

" 'Tis no way ſurpriſing Sir William (ſaid " I) a gentleman of ſo much *ſentiment* ſhould " dread the dangers that might attend his " marrying where he loves: ſince who but " would be vain of following the example of ſo " *refined* a taſte? But what he ſhould apprehend " from the lady's affection for him, is I confeſs " an enigma beyond my powers to reſolve."

" Indeed my lady! ſuppoſe ſhe were jea- " lous? What could you ſay to that? A jea- " lous wife! Save me ye powers from the " worſt of plagues in this domeſtic peſt! ye " furies! chuſe your moſt envenomed rods! " laſh me with ſcorpion ſtings—But ſave me " —ſave me from a jealous wife!" I was ready to ſink, Mira—and thanks to the friendly curtained bonnet, if my confuſion was concealed!

Sir William's delicacy prevented my fears from his looks, while he careleſsly replied— " How differently we think! For, though I " ſhould not like my wife, to doubt either my " faith or honour; I would envy the man " who poſſeſſed ſufficient intereſt in the heart " he valued, to call out thoſe delightful little " ſprings of paſſion that preſerve it from

" ſtagnation

" ſtagnation; that keep alive affection, and " ſecure it from that worſt of ſtates, indif- " ference." All this is well—but Mira, will it be always thus?

" Why Barville!" (rejoined the creature) " through what fiery element haſt thou " lately ſoared to this aerial flight! believe " me man, 'tis much too light—too flimſy to " ſuſtain the weight of groſs mortality, and " thy balloon caſtle of bliſs, however gaily " painted, muſt ſoon come tumbling down. " Barville, as you would avoid a hell here- " after, beware of its uglieſt fiend below, and " fly but the ſhadow of a jealous wife!"

What an inceſſant preacher! How frightful the fellow looked, Mira, while thus vociferating plagues and furies! yet though ready to beat him, not a word could I ſay. Nay, I thought Sir William looked a little blank himſelf, though he affected to laugh it off, by wiſhing him joy of his ſuperior plan of matrimonial felicity with the unſeen lady whom he was about to take *indeed* " for better for worſe." I wiſh Barville was not ſo intimate with this man, and hope with all my ſoul, Miſs Meadows may be ugly, ill tempered, and ſuſpicious—or rather—that ſhe may be beautiful, amiable, and indifferent, while he loves, and is jealous to diſtraction.

Mira, they ſay love harmonizes the ſoul; expands its benevolence; and ſoftens the moſt ſavage natures: it has had a very different

effect

effect on mine; it has rouſed all the faults that lay dormant in my breaſt, and I am now grown ſuſpicious, ſpiteful, and croſs. Well, I ſhall be puniſhed, ſufficiently puniſhed—Barville will fly me—Mira deſpiſe, and I ſhall deteſt myſelf.—Do you remember when you wiſhed Amelia like me? Would you now exchange her follies for mine? Shall I ever be myſelf? Will you ever love me more? My tears—My heart—My burſting heart—Adieu!

LETTER XIX.

Miſs Eglington to Lady Helena Melcome.

I HAVE been moſt delightfully entertained with viewing St. Paul's, the Tower, and Weſtminſter Abbey: they drew me with difficulty from the latter: I could paſs days in that glorious ſepulchre, and ſhall take the earlieſt opportunity to viſit it again. 'Twould be preſumptuous, as well as unneceſſary, to aim at deſcriptions you have ſo repeatedly been preſented with from far abler pens. I wiſhed for you to partake with me the pleaſing ſenſations thoſe ancient monuments of hiſtory and grandeur inſpired. From my acquaintance with the lives and events they recorded, I was quite at home: they ſeemed the ſpeaking pictures of departed friends, and while I felt all that local enjoyment, Doctor Johnſon

Johnſon ſo nobly accounts for; I trembled as I walked over the ſacred duſt, and often found myſelf from an irreſiſtible impulſe, avoiding to tread over that of ſome name I revered. With blended gratitude and rapture my heart bowed before the ſhrines of thoſe whoſe arms had defended their country, whoſe laws protect, or whoſe works improve it.

Fortune led my firſt ſtep to the Abbey the very day it opened to receive the remains of Henderſon. Alarmed by the croud, my companions would have retired, but a ſuperior influence overcame my fears, and I advanced to the ſpot where I imagined the Muſes hovering, and Genius in triumph clapping her wings. They laid him at the feet of the bard whoſe many characters he had ſo highly illuſtrated, while the ſtatue bending over its own Falſtaff, ſeemed mourning the ſecond ſtab its favourite knight had received.

A little incident ſtruck me—a boy of a moſt beautiful form had leaped into the niche, and throwing himſelf into an attitude of the ſweeteſt elegance, his right arm gracefully ſupported on his ſide, the other lightly leaning on the ſtatue; attentively gazed on the ſcene below: Fancy repreſented him as a little Mercury diſpatched by Apollo to bring tidings of the honours his ſon was receiving. Yet brighter honours ſprung over his grave from the tears ſhed around by his attendant friends.

Here

Here too a Johnſon and a Garrick lie: the latter it was never my fortune to ſee; but let me not repine while I can liſten to a Siddons. The ſun of dramatic genius will ſeldom give two ſuch reſplendent ſtars to ſhine at the ſame time.

An indignant bluſh overſpread my cheek as I contemplated the tomb of the immortal Johnſon, at the little critics now in arms, who no longer trembling at the lion's roar, venture to raiſe their feeble, unavailing voices againſt a deathleſs fame! yet theſe (with ſurprizing conſiſtency) cannot forgive his admirers for inſerting with that truth the moraliſt himſelf declared, ſhould ever be the guide of biography, a few trifling errors humanity at beſt may ſtill be prone to, though hid amidſt the blaze of ſuch reſplendent virtues! Faults, which the prevailing taſt for anecdote would at all events e're long have draged from obſcurity, and (diſtorted to worſe ſhape) have given the public without the accompanying merits that now (with candor) veil them, and which ſerve in his own nervous language to prove that "to ſee the higheſt minds thus levelled with the meaneſt, may produce ſome ſolace to the conſciouſneſs of weakneſs, and ſome mortification to the pride of wiſdom,"

What ſcenes of horror the Tower brought to full remembrance! The clangor of arms, of battles, ſeemed rattling around me, and the blood ſtained Richard purſuing my ſteps!

My curioſity once ſatisfied, I wiſh to behold it no more: here the glooms of my mind knew not that ſweet, that complacent relief the Abbey afforded, and which a view of St. Paul's in ſome meaſure reſtored me.

The aſtoniſhment this noble building inſpires muſt be felt, to be underſtood; nor till you enter its reſounding doors, will you forget its wretched ſituation: but once within its elegant dome (whoſe lofty height the eye with labour aſcends) every other idea is loſt in delight and wonder! Yet not long till another check will riſe from the inutility of this, far famed pile, here no altars, no chapels dedicated to different Saints, fill the vaſt ſpace (like its model St. Peter's) and admit their thouſand votaries at the ſame time to worſhip; for one corner of this alone ſeems a church, and all the reſt a bare, unoccupied, and uſeleſs maſs. Yet, though not adapted to the religion of the country, as a public building it reflects the higheſt honour on the opulence of the nation, the magnificence of its prince, and the ſuperior merit of its artiſts.

When firſt from its lofty turrets I gazed on the far ſtretched proſpects around, and the buſy ſwarms that murmured below; I ſhrunk from my own littleneſs, and was loſt in immenſity! but when I conſidered myſelf as one of the individuals of this amazing whole, I was again raiſed, and felt the importance of my ſtation!

Helena,

Helena, you bid me omit nothing—ſhall I deſcend from this ſublime elevation, and drag you through crouds, through ſhops to ſales, to ſights, and a vaſt variety of unnumbered follies?

Whenever I commit a fault that deſerves ſevereſt puniſhment, let me be but carried *ſhopping*, and ſhall receive it indeed! to undergo the fatigue of ſtanding, or ſitting hours together at a counter, liſtening to diſſertations on *tiffany* and *muſlins*—and by men how I wiſhed the fellows with the King of Pruſſia, who inſtead of their *new ſtriped ribbons*, would teach them to wave his conquering banners thro' the air. I never left thoſe places, after ſeeing the poor people tormented, without any intention of paying them for their trouble, but I felt aſhamed, and mortified: never more will I ſuffer myſelf to be induced by promiſes of the *divineſt entertainment* to devote another morning to this ineligible amuſement.

* * * *

If any thing could bribe me to forego the calm delights of my native plains, for the hurry and tumult of a town life; 'twould be the charming entertainment the opera and playhouſes yield, and for theſe I would reſign moſt of its other pleaſures. High as my expectations were raiſed by the voice of fame, my ideas of excellence were more than anſwered by a Mara, and a Siddons, while the one takes " the priſoned ſoul and laps it

in elyſium!" and the other, now harrows the throbbing heart with anguiſh and terror, now ſoftens it to tenderneſs and love! the powers Mrs. Siddons derives from Nature, ſhe dedicates to Nature; no effort, no appearance of ſtudy ſtiffen her action, or direct her tones and features: ſhe does not *repreſent*, ſhe *is* the character. Many other actors (however eminent in their ſeveral lines) might even more excel, would they inſtead of moulding themſelves and ſpeeches into ſet forms and rules—inſtead of ſo frequently carrying the *cloſet*, and *pier-glaſs* on the ſtage; (like her after well underſtanding their author) but throw themſelves into the character, the ſituation; and then let their feelings be their chief guides. Nature would do more were ſhe more left to her own workings, but by ſuch violent efforts, they overleap her bounds, and where the copy glares through the overcharged colouring, the ſweet deluſion vaniſhes.

* * * *

Helena, I have this moment received your letter, and how does the grief it inſpires baniſh every trace of ſorrow the Deſdemona of to night had left in my boſom!

Deſpiſe you! no—no—I will love, will admire you more than ever, will you but riſe ſuperior to a weakneſs you muſt conquer ere you ever can be happy. And, oh! Helena, friend of my ſoul—companion of my youth! and one of the ſweeteſt hopes of my future hours;

hours; not only your peace of mind, but all your ſhining virtues muſt quickly fade away before the baneful influence of this cruel enemy, unleſs your utmoſt reſolution is inſtantly exerted to cruſh it ere it gains too great a force to be reſiſted.

The fault of nature? and would you therefore give it way? From whence ſprings ſo low, ſo ſordid a vice (I muſt be candid) I can't determine, but hardly believe from Nature: yet if it does, the greater the neceſſity to ſtruggle againſt a power, that rooted muſt be ſtronger and far more difficult to conquer than caſual habits.

How guarded ſhould we ever be againſt the firſt approach of error!

" *One error overlook'd another breeds,*
" *Vice follows vice, and miſery ſucceeds.*"

From an impulſe of vanity you firſt ſought admiration, not with a view of being approved by ſome worthy heart, whoſe affection, while it made you happy, you might reward; but ſolely to trifle with your power. Innocently! Ah, Helena! could there be innocence in deception? Once condeſcending to ſo mean an act, it taught you to fear deception in return: an avarice of praiſe ſucceeded, and when not fully fed, ſuſpicion followed, and your mind now weakened, you grew doubtful of your own merits, and apprehenſive of ſuperior excellence. Then, Helena—how eaſy

then the ſteps to envy—jealouſy—hatred—revenge!—quick—quickly ſhut your breaſt againſt the black approaching train: by one noble effort regain your firſt ſimplicity, and innocence of heart, and then defy them all. But charge them not to Nature—they were the offspring of pride, of vanity alone, and common ſenſe (if ſuffered) will eaſily prevail. But now my love, 'tis now you muſt call it to your aid—now before thoſe ſtrange unwelcome gueſts have got a deeper footing.

How fortunate for you the man you love poſſeſſes a mind that cannot take advantage of your weakneſs—did he retort—and with unmanly triumph play back your ungenerous arts; (which though already ſeverely puniſhed, you well deſerve, tho' that would not exculpate him) I would adviſe, what ere it coſt you, never to ſee him more.

I am highly pleaſed with Sir William's delicacy: yet how could he but appear diſconcerted on Mr. Townly's apropos diſplay? that he does not immediately follow his advice, is a proof of his paſſion, and I fancy too of the hopes he entertains (from your known good ſenſe) of your ſubduing ſo dreadful a failing; or perhaps not all his affection would avail: for truſt me, Helena, the picture Townly's Jealous Wife preſents, however glaring, is but a juſt one.

Then how impolitic is ſuch a woman?—nothing will ſooner tend to alienate the very affec-

affection ſhe is ſo very tenacious of preſerving, than thoſe perpetual captious doubts and ſhadowy fears, which however they may for a while pleaſe, or amuſe the lover, will ſoon diſguſt the huſband.

I bleſs, as a good omen, the continuance of that ſincerity and candor I ever ſo adored, and which thoſe new intruders have not been able yet to baniſh from their ſweet reſidence in my Helena's breaſt. How ungenerous the woman who keeps her failings ſmothered, 'till ſecure of the huſband, ſhe gives them vent to the deſtruction of his love and happineſs together!

Sir William ſees your error—let him ſee too, that for his ſake, you can conquer it: you can if you will—nothing is impoſſible to virtue; and where that diſapproves, we are not to enquire where the fault originated, or whether difficult or eaſy to eradicate; but determining to effect it, proceed with reſolution: for in determination half the difficulty lies.

Obſerve, my deareſt girl, how falſe vanity is to itſelf: while it excited a deſire to monopolize its *tributes*; (your ſtyle for thirſt of abſolute dominion) it rendered you diffident of your powers to command them! Confine your wiſhes within the bounds of reaſon, and you'll no longer doubt the effect of thoſe charms of either mind or perſon, which Sir William feels, and all the world allows you.

Inure yourſelf to hear with eaſe his frequent praiſe of beauty or of merit: ſilly girl!

While he moſt praiſes others, does he not tacitly raiſe the ſuperior power to which he bowes? Call his attention to objects moſt worthy admiration—the more generous your eſtimation of other worth, the more compariſon will favour you. Would you be preferred only becauſe none were deſerving but yourſelf? As well might you glory in being accompliſhed in Greenland, or fair among the Indians.

Ah, Helena! and is it you who cenſure "Nature's ſuperior beings," for capriciouſly leaving the paths of happineſs deſign'd them, and chuſing leſs attractive! Helena—ſtray no further—reflect where that you are purſuing leads—that thorns and briars will but the more entangle, and lacerate you as you go—regain the wonted way where peace attended every ſtep, and now with added bleſſings invites you to embrace it—Oh, chuſe it, and be happy!

LETTER XXX.

Lady Helena Melcome to Miſs Eglington.

I WILL endeavour—ſweet monitreſs—I will endeavour—but dearly, if I vanquiſh will the conqueſt coſt me.

Sir William was attending to accompany me to the rooms where he was to dance with me, when your letter arrived: terrified—convinced—I reſolved inſtantly to obey its dictates

tates. The glooms of my mind, riſing to my face, favoured my deſign: I pleaded indiſpoſition, declined dancing, and inſiſted on his chuſing another partner.

"Could he find pleaſure in dancing with another? Would he leave me one moment while ill?" I perſiſted in my intreaty, and he was obliged to comply.

Mira, he advanced to one of the leaſt attractive women preſent—I was mortified—your *compariſons* ſtruck to my heart—The lady was fortunately engaged. I acquainted Sir William, Miſs Stanly was not yet provided with a partner: Mira, ſhe was the lovely girl who had made me moſt uneaſy: Barville ſtared—inſolence!—I could have beat him with my fan—how did he dare ſuppoſe—Well, he led her to her place: I thought myſelf a heroine, and felt a kind of triumph—for a while—but he need not have been ſo—ſo very attentive—ſo very officious I mean—How ridiculous to ſee a man dangling and ſkipping about like a monkey. There was no occaſion to hold her hand ſo long—and then it is ſo bold—ſo ill bred to gaze at one's partner all the time one's dancing—if ever I make him dance with her again—

I flew out of the room—and returned immediately—he was tieing a picture that had fallen from her boſom; ſmiled at his own awkwardneſs—and—yes, Mira—I heard him ſay—he wondered the happy captive wiſhed to ſtray from ſo ſweet a manſion—this was not

to be borne—'twas abſolute indelicacy, and, feeling for poor Miſs Stanly, I gave him ſuch a look!—but flinging ſuddenly away, the quick motion making my head ſwim, 'twas with difficulty I was kept from fainting.

Barville now pretended to be violently alarmed, and led me out of the room, preſſing my hand to his boſom with ſuch an affected look of anguiſh—the hypocrite! how I hate deception!—on recovering myſelf, I withdrew my hand.

"Bleſs me, Sir, how negligent does your attempt at politeneſs make you appear—pray return to your *partner:* Miſs Stanly will wonder, will be offended at your abſence."

"Miſs Stanly!" with an emphaſis, (his eyes ſparkling with pleaſure at her name) "Miſs Stanly!"—(how the wretch delights in the ugly ſound!) "What is the world to my Helena?"

"Your Helena, Sir,—no, indeed!"—and I called for my ſervants.

"Are you going? I will attend you—yet—into what a ſituation have you thrown me by inſiſting on my engaging a partner!—I muſt not—"

"Whatever your *ſituation* or *engagements*, Sir, I beg they may not be interrupted by the mere common forms of civility I can ſo eaſily diſpenſe with." The fellow looked half concern, half pleaſure—but without troubling myſelf with either, I flung away. Mira I repented before I got home, and but for

ſhame

ſhame and propriety would have returned. He had now no further interruption from me, and his Miſs Stanly might engage—

What a night have I paſſed? tis one o'clock, and he appears not: his *partner*, no doubt, muſt engage his firſt attention—yet as I was indiſpoſed, he might civilly call to enquire—but what's my indiſpoſition to him? If he ſhould come, he'll certainly gueſs, and I ſhall appear, ſhall feel ſo ridiculous—he comes—Mira, he's already here—I've half a mind not to ſee him—I muſt at laſt, ſo had beſt go immediately.

* * * *

I expected Barville's guilty looks would have kept up my reſentment, but the openneſs of his manner, and the tenderneſs of his behaviour, diſpelled half my doubts, and all my diſpleaſure.

And Mira—ſome advantages reſult from theſe kind of diſputes—the delightful nonſenſe that attends a reconciliation—I believe in my ſoul this is one of my reaſous for ſo often—I have done—ſweet chider I have done: I ſee diſapprobation darting from your eye: you bid me beware of this ſatiating folly, whoſe effect will be loſt in repetition, and *that diſguſt* you threaten (how could you uſe ſuch a horrid word) ſtares me full in the face.

Sure my paſſions are formed of April clouds and ſunſhine; ſcarce does this warm my heart to joy and tranquillity, but the chilling damps of thoſe deſtroy the blooming promiſe.

In

In one of thoſe *favourable* intervals I mentioned the brilliancy of the Company the preceding evening; praiſed with tolerable grace (and called for Sir William's opinion) the ladies moſt admired, and not very reluctantly a tribute to Miſs Stanly fell from my lips. Had Sir William diſclaimed, I ſhould have felt the affront, but it was ſome conſolation to obſerve he had a little dependence on my underſtanding. This is ſome progreſs—I will not deſpair; yet—yet I may be happy—

* * * *

Would you believe it, Mira! Mr. Townly, contrary to all his hopes, has fallen violently in love with Miſs Meadows, who arrived a few days ago: the ever buſy little god, with lucky or unlucky aim (I know not which to call it) has not done leſs execution on the lady's part. 'Twould divert you to ſee Townly: fifty different paſſions contend at the ſame time in his medley countenance: now Nature aſſerts her empire, and he is all rapture and love: but ſoon folly knocks them down, and he looks as if, were the parſon and hangman by his ſide, he would not know which to prefer. 'Tis a moot point whether love or faſhion triumph at the laſt. Alas! I fear me they never will be again reconciled.

I could not but triumph a little on firſt ſeeing him after this event—„ joy, Mr. Townly! the fates work for you in the dark, and decree your happineſs in deſpite of yourſelf."

" Rather,

" Rather, my Lady, ſome welch witch (Miſs Meadows is from wales) has conjured a fatal web to enſnare it."

" If you find your chains ſo uneaſy, Sir, there are already many, I underſtand, who would gladly relieve you without complaint of thoſe potent charms."

" Relieve me! by heaven I'd blaſt the man that but dared to look on them."

" Oh! Mr. Townly, 'tis time indeed to fear a ſpell, ſince jealouſy already draws her magic circle around the " ſolid caſtle" you had raiſed to happineſs."

" Why your Ladyſhip ſhould always be ſo hard on me, I can't conceive: but however lightly you think of my ſyſtem, not even this angel (or rather demon) ſhall o'er throw it. Would to heaven—(though I would not reſign her to the man who breathes) the devil had had her ere ſhe ſet it tottering thus."

" Poor Mr. Townly! ha! ha! ha! How I compaſſionate the hardſhip of your caſe! But pray ſince Miſs Meadows ſhall not prevail againſt your floating ſyſtem, and yet you will not reſign her to the *man who breathes*; how do you mean to proceed? better ſhut her beyond your own as well as every other reach."

" I mean, Madam, to offer ſome propoſals to her conſideration: if ſhe accedes to them (no longer a victim) ſhe may lead me to the altar when ſhe pleaſes: if not, I'll fly: for no woman alive ſhall ever make a fool of me."

" Ha!

"Ha! ha! ha! fly, Mr. Townly, and *blaſt the man who dares but to look on her!*" Yes, yes; you are in a fine flying trim indeed, with ſuch a weight about your heart!"

"Mr. Townly, you ſay, I am hard upon you: I wiſh you would allow me to be your friend, and I owe you ſome return for the leſſons you ſo ſeaſonably taught me."

"Leſſons, my Lady! (was there ever ſuch a fool, Mira? I could have bit my tongue for the ſlip, but proceeded)"

"There is no occaſion to prove the thinneſs of the veil with which you endeavour to blind your underſtanding: 'twould be an affront to the good ſenſe, that however unaccountably prejudiced, clearly ſees thro' the poor, the flimſy deluſion. This prejudice then, before which love, happineſs, and reaſon are about to fall; whence Mr. Townly, whence its ſuperior force?"

"That my Lady is no longer prejudice which the world adopts, nor that reaſon it rejects; they then change names, and while we live in the polite world, 'tis wiſdom's part to conform to its ſuperior ſway."

"But what, Sir, muſt be that judgment, that can thus invert truth, and torture common ſenſe? Perhaps tho' that alſo has undergone a metamorphoſe, and Folly was its name."

"Very likely, Madam; and now 'tis folly no longer. The greateſt part of our lives

are

are (muſt at beſt be) ſpent in purſuit of trifles, that thus become of too much importance to be diſregarded, and who attempt to riſe above them, but ſtand in the light of that happineſs which will far better bear one ſevere ſtroke from real ill, than perpetual buffets from trifles."

" And ſo by one great effort, better tear yourſelf from a woman you love, becauſe you fear her beauty, her virtues will ever command your heart; to the eternal deriſion of fools, and contempt of faſhion! A noble reſolution truly! For ſhame, Mr. Townly! ſhake off the wretched influence by which you are at preſent guided: No longer ſuffer your good ſenſe to be ſhackled by the contemptible opinion of a few worthleſs coxcombs who preſume to call themſelves the world, and who affect to obtrude their idle notions as its ſentiments. But for the deluſive principles you have imbibed from *a ſet*, the bane of ſociety; inſtead of thus ungratefully rejecting, how would you bleſs the fortune that thus with both hands courts you to be bleſt: for neither Miſs Meadows with indifference—"

"Heavens, my lady!—whither, whither are you running! Miſs Meadows not indifferent! Oh!—that doubles the ſtroke! Could we hide ourſelves in ſome lone iſle far, far from obſervation, from the world; I were indeed bleſt: but argue as you will, to dare its penetrating eye; to carry our folly into public

view

view, and by defying, but more provoke its cenſure; 'twere temerity, madneſs. What does your ladyſhip call *a ſet?* Surely that only is the world which is regarded, and from that opinion I dare not depart."

"Well, Sir—ſince your ſickly imagination rejects the food, it would otherwiſe prefer, it may be leſs diſpleaſing prepared another way: what think you of a famous rival of thoſe mighty potentates, Faſhion and Cuſtom; yclept Singularity? Singularity, Mr. Townly, is no leſs worthy your purſuit, and for your comfort and encouragement, is equally ſupported by Folly. Suppoſe you inliſt yourſelf under her far more diſtinguiſhed, tho' leſs followed banner; and ſo by uniting the *lover* and the *huſband*, riſe a conſpicuous individual to obſervation, inſtead of being loſt in the common herd of indifferents?" Mira, I expected Townly would either laugh, or be offended—No—he took me ſeriouſly; and declared my hint was worth reflection, and that ſhould he not be ſucceſsful in prevailing with Miſs Meadows to accord to his propoſals, rather than loſe her for ever, he might be tempted to *try* the effect of *ſingularity*.

Perhaps, Mira, you ſuppoſe this man a fool—on this ſubject he certainly is one, but were you to hear him on moſt others, you would find Sir William's firſt eſtimation of him by no means a partial one: though, from what I have written, you might miſtake it for irony.

irony. Is the world going mad?—Huſh, Helena—Mira will ſay you are hitting yourſelf another ſlap—But here the caſe is widely different—I do not throw away, but am tenacious of the good I value moſt, and would wiſh for ever to preſerve. Nor is mine an adopted folly; for I cannot in this particular ſubſcribe to your ſcale of progreſſive error, but fear mine to be the very pith of my nature.

To you, ſuperior maid! 'tis given to ſoar with equal courſe (not with a caſual momentary flight) to excellence! Oh! Mira! ſtill as you purſue the happy way, look back, and animate my feeble wing that emulous would follow, but can never overtake you.

LETTER XXXI.

Miſs Eglington to Lady Helena Melcome.

GRANDBY comes—He is every moment expected.—My heart flutters at every coach.—At each rap at the door I ſtart forward to meet him.—With what new pleaſure ſhall I behold my Grandby! For, tho' nothing could raiſe my opinion of his worth, compariſon has ſet it in a more conſpicuous light. Thoſe confident men, Helena,—think of a ſet of them ſtopping as you meet them, and, with affected looks of aſtoniſhment, crying out—"What angels! How divinely handſome!"

ſome!" and ſuch ſtuff. I am ready to ſink with confuſion, and were it indeed owing to my face, could almoſt deform it, for expoſing me to ſuch affronts; while Amelia walks on, without the leaſt emotion, or laughs at, and comforts me with the hope of my being better reconciled to ſuch polite behaviour by cuſtom—as if time could inure me to inſolence.

One of thoſe kind of bold men perſecutes, tires, and frightens me. He is a peer, Helena—a peer with the ſordid ſoul of a mercenary tradeſman, the ignorance of a ruſtic, and the unformed manners of a cit. Lord Blandon will take no refuſal; neither will indifference mortify, nor contempt abaſh him: wrapt up in the imaginary importance of his external trappings, he is careleſs of opinion, and bids defiance to cenſure. How unlike, in every thing how unlike Lord Sedley! Tho' I fear, from his boiſterous temper, to let him know my heart is actually engaged—not even an intimation that there are others I ſhould prefer to him (indeed almoſt every man I ever beheld) can deter the refined Lord Blandon from perſiſting.

Mr. Breeze, another gentleman in my liſt, (to borrow your term) tho' leſs formidable, is no leſs conſpicuous. "His hopes ſpring into life by my ſmiles, like inſects by the vivifying rays of Phœbus in ſpring!" and unfortunately, Helena, my ſmiles are continually called out by ſome beautiful alluſion, or metaphor,

metaphor, and by the grave, pedantic air in which they are delivered. Mr. Breeze is juſt from the univerſity, but declares he does not intend to "animate any longer the ſentiments he imbibed there, excepting thoſe the Muſes taught him; for he cannot think of keeping up, with the breath of his approbation, the idea gone abroad, That all ſcience is incompatible with the intelligence of a gentleman: for what is gentleman without love, and love without poetry? His ideas, without love, will never be fanned into life; nor love, without poetry, be enabled to direct its ethereal rays." And lo! Helena, your poor friend is now expoſed to thoſe cruel arrows pointed by "fanned fires," and "dipped in ethereal rays!"

Lord Sedley is in town: he ſometimes honours us with a viſit, always pays his compliments when we meet in public, but is never particular to me. Amiable, delicate, conſiderate Sedley! how I admire! how I revere! how ſincerely wiſh you well!

Lady Priſcilla Blomer is to be with us this evening: Amelia declares, when I ſee her—hear her, I ſhall not be able to live without her. Lady Elmour, and her Lord, will be of our party: my little gentleman too; but, I hope, not Lord Blandon—

* * * *

Your letter arrives juſt as I am cloſing mine. Go on, my charming girl! be not diſcouraged

couraged by difficulties; they will diminiſh as you proceed. Had not concern prevented, how often had I laughed as I read! Ridiculous Townly!—Poor Miſs Meadows!—Helena, oblige me not in future to add—unfortunate Barville! nor induce me to regret that ſo amiable a man ſhould be made ſo by the friend of your

MIRA.

LETTER XXXII.

Mrs. Boothby to Lady Eglington.

MR. Grandby's arrival has given us all new life. We were a large party laſt night when he was announced: Miſs Eglington's emotion was viſible; Grandby's extacy could not be checked by the fear of obſervation; and the hearts of thoſe children of nature were inſtantly read by every creature preſent. I felt for both. The buſtle of introduction gave a little time for recollection, and Mira was ſoon more compoſed; but the ſuffuſion of joy remained that lighted up her features to a brilliancy almoſt divine.

Grandby was the object of univerſal attention. Lord Blandon regarded him with looks of diſlike, that ſeemed to ſay, but for fear, they had ſoon improved into thoſe of contempt; Mr. Breeze, with fear and irreſolution

tion, while he ſeemed undetermined whether to make him the ſubject of a panegyric, or ſatire; Lady Priſcilla Blomer, with evident aſtoniſhment; and Lord and Lady Elmour, with admiration and pleaſure.

By a kind of intuition, Grandby, in a few moments, ſeemed maſter of every character: I never ſaw him to more advantage: highly diverted with Mr. Breeze, he contrived to draw him out to full length, but with ſo much good-nature, that even the ſullen Blandon ſeemed, for a moment, pleaſed with him. While the card parties were forming, I happenened to overhear Mr. Breeze's addreſs to his Lordſhip,—

"Do you not apprehend, my Lord, ſome unfavourable influence from the unexpected approach of this rival of Appllo?" What! is he a poet too?"

"No, my Lord: oh no! that would be too much—too potent an advantage."

"What the devil do you mean, then?"

"I would only infer that—that the elegance of his form might rival the bloooming God himſelf.'

"Or, in plain Engliſh, Mr. Breeze—the Apollo of the age.—But, d—n me if I ever fear a commoner, let his form, and voice too, rival all the Gods together."

"Then your Lordſhip muſt pardon the ſtrain of mine, when it trembling reſounds, that my fears are more inſpired by the potent

influence

influence this ſingle commoner emits, than the collective influence of the whole Peerage could effect, your Lordſhip's potent preponderancy included."

Soon after, while Grandby was anſwering my fifty queſtions about you, Amelia joined us.

"Mr. Grandby, you will not find my Lord Blandon a Sedley, I can tell you: depend on it he will not reſign his pretenſions tamely.—Why, he has been going to fight twenty times already about wagers, and la-it, dies, and races."

"Going to fight, Miſs Eglington? He did well to reſerve all his proweſs for this occaſion, when, no doubt, Mr. Breeze will call it out, in ſtrain heroic! or ſhould its potency fall on me, even I might be induced to face would but Amelia be my ſecond."

"Who, I! expect nothing from me, you creature, but my intereſt with Breeze to write your elegy. Remember how you ſerved me about Lord Sedley: but for you I had been in town a month ſooner."

"Then half the pleaſure of novelty had by this been over."

"Huſh, you figure! and do not immediately deſtroy the little idea I begin to have of you.—Why, Lady Priſcilla ſays you do not appear quite ſo horrid as ſhe expected."

"From your repreſentation? I thank you, Madam: had you praiſed, ſhe had been diſ-

appoined

appointed. Oh, I was born to be obliged to you!"

"Hark ye, Grandby,"—and, leading him further off, ſhe ſeemed adviſing, or propoſing ſomething, with a moſt ſerious air. Grandby burſt into a loud laugh, kiſſed her hand, as ſhe flew off to Lady Priſcilla, and again joind his Mira, and Lady Elmour, whom he ſeems to admire as much as ſhe does.

you may be ſure Mr. Grandby will almoſt live with us: Mr. Boothby, who, you know, does not much obſerve form, was urgent with him to remain entirely with us: Grandby, I expected, declined it.

Amelia amuſes herſelf with the ſighs of all her admirers, but hitherto diſtinguiſhes none: I wiſh ſhe were leſs fond of Lady Priſcilla; indeed I impute much of her conduct to her leſſons and example. I ſhall continue to obſerve her cloſely, and will inform you, in time, of any thing that may give cauſe for apprehenſion.

LETTER XXXIII.

Miſs Eglington to Lady Helena Melcome.

MUCH as I had longed for Grandby's arrival, I wiſhed him an hundred miles off when he entered. The room was full of company;

company; ſome of them the laſt I could have deſired preſent at our firſt interview.

This horrid Lord Blandon, and Lady Priſcilla Blomer. How can Amelia be ſo infatuated! True, ſhe is handſome to a degree; but the careleſſneſs of her manner—the levity of her converſation—and her eyes! —I never ſaw ſuch diſagreeable eyes in my life—yet Lord Blandon calls them divine. Heavens! what looks ſhe caſt on Mr. Grandby! I could not tell whether they meant ſcorn or approbation, ſo little am I verſed in ſuch language: but, if I may judge from the turn of his, they raiſed in him nothing but diſguſt; while Lady Elmour engaged his utmoſt admiration.

Helena, what a flattering reflection to know one's ſelf beloved by a man who can make ſuch diſtinctions! Yet Lord Elmour, (what a charming pair you two had been, Helena!) Lord Elmour ſeemed uneaſy at Grandby's pointed preference: he looked as if wondering at the eaſe with which I obſerved him, at the very moment I was repeating to myſelf,—

" *Great ſouls by inſtinct to each other turn,*
" *Demand alliance, and in friendſhip burn.*"

Among other company the ſame party met the evening after at my Lord Elmour's; where I had new reaſon for amazement at his indifference to his Lady, if real; or his motive for aſſuming it, if not. After ſome converſation, equally

equally intereſting, Lady Priſcilla was lamenting to Amelia (who was all ſympathy at the tale of woe) the alarming illneſs of her lap-dog, her ſweet little gypſey;—the greateſt beauty—the lovelieſt dog in the world!

"I wonder at your Ladyſhip's partiality to thoſe ſtupid animals," (ſaid Miſs Tivolly, a young lady I had now firſt ſeen) when there are ſo many more attractive pets. A dog, when I am low, (which alas! from the delicacy of my ſpirits, is too often the caſe) never amuſes me, but ever ſits, a melancholy lump, on the lap, or ſleeps away his life upon his cuſhion; while my ſquirrel is perpetually diverting me with his antic little tricks Oh, I ſhould die in thoſe horrid intervals of ſolitude, but for the conſiderate exertions of my ſquirrel to relieve me.—

"You will pardon, Madam, my breathing a contrary ſentiment from you," cried Mr. Breeze; "the elaſtic evolutions of that creature, ever prompt my apprehenſions."

"Perhaps from ſympathy you prefer a monkey?" (aſked Mr. Bond, who had hitherto looked through his eye-brows on all the company in ſilence).

"From ſympathy, Sir! I don't.—Really, Sir, the idea of a gentleman cannot poſſibly diverge to the comprehenſion of your alluſion. But I hate—I abhor—I deteſt a monkey!"

"Why there now," replied Mr. Bond, "what need of diverging? let them but pur-

ſue their own natural track, and the metaphor will be apparent. Do not their imitations aſtoniſh us? And when nature has taken ſuch pains to preſent ſo exact a reſemblance, can you be ſo ungrateful as to diſlike the miniature? A monkey, and a gentleman! Oh, when both are dreſſed, they almoſt look the ſame: their evolutions, too, are alike: and both are, doubtleſs, prompted by the inſpirations of the ſame train of ideas."

"Sir," ſaid Mr. Grandby, "I cannot but own myſelf inſpired by the ſame ſentiments which Mr. Breeze now animates. When I ſee a lady dangling the chains of her monkey and lovers together, I am mortified at the preference the ſuperior powers of the former univerſally attract: and were it my ſituation, I ſhould certainly feel jealous of ſo potent a rival."

"The more you can expatiate in favour of thoſe aping miniatures," (replied Breeze) "the more my expanding ſenſations denounce againſt the humiliating reſemblance, and as a lord of the creation, my ideas riſe againſt compariſons that tend to debaſe the ſublime intelligence of man!—of man, whoſe ſuperiority of figure, of thought, and of action, I ſhall ever ſupport with my utmoſt vocal powers; for even now I feel thoſe potent emanations glowing, like fanned embers, through all the vital regions of my frame."

"Lord, Mr. Breeze;" (cried Amelia) "how can you be ſo envious? Why I have been

been going fifty times myſelf to get a monkey to divert me, when fatigued with the ſameneſs of a lover, but that a new one, fortunately rendered it unneceſſary. I adviſe you, by all means, to be reconciled to monkeys, or you will never be a favourite with the ladies yourſelf; for they are coming more and more in faſhion every day."

"Not having the fortune, Madam, to breathe the ardour of my ſupreme devotion to a lady who honours monkeys with her approbation, there will be no occaſion to purſue the dictates of your ſyſtem: but as a ſuperior lord of the creation, could the delicacy of my ſenſations forgive the approaches of this animal to my own ſimilitude, I ſhould ſtill, after the harm I once ſuffered from the miſchievous fluctuations to which this ungrateful little monſter is ever prone, ſtill fear it in the utmoſt extreme!"

"Oh dear, Mr. Breeze!" (ſcreamed Miſs Tivolly) "did it pick one of your eye-brows, "while you ſlept? Oh! it was the higheſt imprudence to let it ſee you work, for they delight in imitation."

"No, Madam," (anſwered Mr. Bond), he only dreſſed in his maſter's uniform, and paraded the Park, while his friends imagined Mr. Breeze had only diſplayed a new-faſhioned ſword, that elegantly trailed behind."

"Or rather," (ſaid Mr. Grandby, to divert Mr. Breeze's riſing anger), "ſome beau-

tiful ode, or biting ſatire, was hurled prone to deſtruction by the malicious influence of this fell little imp's envy and ſpite."—" Yet, Sir, your conjectures wander in the labyrinth of error, from which the clew of my information ſhall now conduct you. I had, one evening, dreſſed, with the anxious care of Juno when ſhe deſigned to enſlave the Thunderer by the potency of her charms; for I was to have danced with a lady, whom I then ignorantly imagined to ſhine, ſupremely arrayed in celeſtial beauty; but I have ſince beheld the real Queen of love, to whom, like a ſecond Paris, I devote the kernel of my heart!

" The lady being unfortunately attached to one of thoſe urchins, from whoſe diminitive form I did not apprehend an invaſion; Incautiouſly ventured to bid it adieu, while ſhe was taking her leave, and breathing, from her lips divine, a thouſand odoriferous ſweets on the odious little negro: ſtill as I offered incenſe to the bright goddeſs of my aſpiring ſighs, through the medium of this foul imp of her idolatry, and cried,—Adieu, ſweet emblem of my ambling hopes! adieu, dear innocent, adieu!—the envious ingrate, with the ſpring of the Little Devil himſelf, forſook the fair manſion of his lady's arms, and, fixing his unmerciful claws in my aſtoniſhed head, in an inſtant demoliſhed the elegant fabric, the curious erection of a whole day! The cruel tyrant ſeemed now to enjoy the devaſtation

vaſtation it was making, ſkipping from lock to lock, from toupee to chinon, and back again to curls! while a cloud of powder darkened the room; and all the impriſoned ſweets of maréchale and amber, perfumed the ambient air! What could I do? my hands were employed in preſerving my features from more inglorious havock; and though my ſcreams, and the loud ungrateful laughs of her for whom I endured the irreparable misfortune, had brought the whole family together, not one would venture to engage the fury of the pert, enraged animal, nor relieve me from its further inſults. At length, by one of nature's violent exertions, I ſhook him off with a jerk that laid him ſprawling on the floor, where he lay breathleſs with the ſhock, till his miſtreſs, whoſe mirth was now converted to the moſt agonizing lamentations, took him to her ſympathiſing boſom, darting on me, in vollies black looks of the moſt petrifying anger! All idea of the ball was then at once annihilated, for ſhe ſtaid at home to nurſe the darling of her little affections, while I was happy to retreat.—The vivid bloom of my pink ſatin coat all faded by the fallen honours of my agitated curls, and my head quite a—a twaddle, egad!"

"Had it been me" (ſaid Lord Blandon), "I would have cruſhed the creature's life out. For my own part, I hate pets of all ſorts, except women and horſes; and equally admire

their tricks and ſpirit, but never allow either to conquer me.

" I wonder not" (obſerved Grandby) " at your Lordſhip's natural taſte for a horſe! Oh, 'tis a noble brute indeed! But why is lady Elmour alone ſilent on this important ſubject? While moſt of her ſex, with that tenderneſs ſo congenial to the ſoftneſs of their hearts, ſo love and protect thoſe engaging little creatures, does ſhe alone neglect and deſpiſe them?'

" Ah dear! my Lady" (cried Miſs Tivolly), " have you not a favourite pet too?" " Ah Miſs Tivolly, Mr. Grandby" (replied her Ladyſhip), " draw me not out, I beſeech you, on a ſubject ſo apt to run away with me."

" Then, Madam, you are fond of thoſe enchanting creatures?" (aſked Lady Priſcilla) —" Remember, Amelia (whiſpering), to tell Blomer, for he envies my ſweet gypſey, and is always holding up Lady Elmour) as a wonderful example."

" I have indeed" contiuued the amiable Lady Elmour) " the ſweeteſt little pet in the world! a moſt playful little marmoſet, that engages my attention as much as thoſe Ladies favourites do theirs: perhaps more ſo; for I am not only miſerable when it is ill, but deprive myſelf of the moſt agreeable amuſements to attend, and often weep over it with the utmoſt ſolicitude till well, and then my joy is as extravagant as my grief was before."

" Oh

" Oh dear Madam" (cried Miſs Tivolly), " how you charm me by a tenderneſs ſo like my own! I am often laughed at for the extreme delicacy of my feelings whenever I ſhed tears for my ſquirrel; and my mother was angry with me laſt Sunday for ſtaying from church to nurſe Skip, who bit his tongue and got a fever. Had it been a party of pleaſure, indeed, I might not have ſo much reſolution; but on thoſe occaſions I can truſt my maid, who is very careful, in my abſence, of Skippy."

" Has your marmoſet tricks, Lady Elmour?" aſked one; " Is it witty?" another; " Is it ſpiteful and miſchievous?" Mr. Breeze.

" I may be partial, but no muſic is ſweeter to me than its chattering attempts. Its tricks divert me beyond all the harlequins of the age; and, naturally good-natured, Mr. Breeze himſelf would be pleaſed with its harmleſs vivacity."

Mr. Bond ſeemed at firſt all aſtoniſhment, as not expecting this from Lady Elmour. As ſhe proceeded, the gloom thickened on his brow, till hums and groans at laſt burſt out into ſpeech.

" This is more intolerable than all I liſtened to before. Yes, I had hoped for ſomething here: but neither ſenſe nor virtue can withſtand the torrent deluging the land!"

Grandby himſelf looked all ſurpriſe; while Mr. Boothby's and Lord Elmour's interchange

of ſmiles prepared me more for the *dénouement* I before expected.

One ſhrill voice of entreaty now prevailed; for Mr. Breeze's "Oh la! la!" and "Heaven defend me! What will become of me now!" were almoſt loſt in the Ladies "And ſhan't we ſee the divine little creature? Dear, dear Lady Elmour, indulge us with a ſight! Let me ſtroke it, and let me but give it one kiſs, I beſeech you!"—And all was confuſion; the Ladies riſing to be ready to meet Lady Elmour, who went out for her pet; Mr. Breeze imploring to be ſheltered behind the bulwark of my fan from the marmoſet's obſervation; and Mr. Bond hunting for his hat, to eſcape from ſo mortifying a ſight as that of Lady Elmour dandling a monkey;—when a ſervant threw open the door. The Ladies advanced—Mr. Bond groaned—My little hero ſcreamed, and held up my apron to guard his toupee—When, lo! Lady Elmour entered the room, bearing in her arms—not a marmoſet, but a beautiful child, who, as ſhe ſtopped at the entrance, ſmiled on the company, kiſſed his little hand, and then, crowing aloud at the uproar he cauſed, flung his arms about his mother's neck as half fearing what had ſo entertained him.

A beam of rapture flaſhed from Grandby's eyes; and Mr. Bond, with a kind of ſob that betrayed his emotion, clapt his hands in triumph!

triumph! Had they beheld a ghoſt, the Ladies could not have ſtarted back with greater ſigns of aſtoniſhment—Every countenance inſtantly fell—while diſappointment and diſguſt ſucceeded hope and expectation.———" Is this all!——Only think of Lady Elmour!—How provoking!—How ridiculous!—Oh! the mountain and mouſe indeed!"—and other like ejaculations, were echoed about; while I with an involuntary ſpring which the terrified Breeze miſtook for the monkey's approach (leaving half my apron in his gripe), flew to the lovely mother, and her cherub, and, claſping my arms about both, for ſome moments wept on her boſom.

Here had I ſtopped, I had done well; but unconſcious of what I was doing) ſnatching the boy, and placing him in his father's arms, I repeated aloud, " Happy, thrice happy Elmour! look round and bleſs the power who ſo ſupremely favours you! Oh! careſs the treaſures of your heart as they deſerve, ere too late you repent the ingratitude offended Heaven may puniſh, by depriving you of them for ever!" He was affected, and bent over the child to conceal his emotion; while the infant, pleaſed with his careſſes, fondly embraced his father. Oh, how the wife, the mother, gazed on them both in ſilence! as I tranſported—But the animadverſions from moſt part of the company awakened my recollection,

"What does Miſs Eglington mean?—Look round!—How very ill bred!—But ſhe never was in town before!"

I hung down my head—Yet not thoſe—'twas Lady Elmour I feared; but ſhe, when I ventured to raiſe my inquiring eyes, looked all goodneſs and complacency.

Mr. Bond obſerving my embarraſſment, and miſtaking the cauſe, took my hand, and joining it to Lady Elmour's, exclaimed, "Siſter excellences! Oh, as you riſe ſuperior o'er your ſex's follies, ſtill be above the fear of its contempt or cenſure, that fatal weakneſs that often triumphs over goodneſs, ſenſe and virtue! for many like you would ſhine, would they like you but dare to vindicate their judgments!"

Mr. Breeze now ſhaking himſelf like a creature who had juſt eſcaped a ducking, advanced to apologize for transferring the apprehended ruin of his locks to the damage done my apron, a piece of which he held in his hand, declaring he would ever preſerve it as a trophy.

A cry of "Cards—cards, or I die!" now rouſed Lady Elmour from the pleaſure ſhe was enjoying from the attention and careſſes her ſweet boy received from one part of the company. He was diſmiſſed—and reflection, pleaſure, complaints, and cenſure, were for a while abſorbed by the magic powers of play.

Before

Before I was obliged to mix in thoſe large parties, where converſation, when it was deſirable, could not be enjoyed, I never took delight in cards: but now I prefer them as leſſer evils, and am often obliged to them for the deliverance they afford me from perſecution, impertinence, and ſcandal.

LETTER XXXIV.

Mr. Grandby to Sir George Lovemore.

WOULD to Heaven, Lovemore, I were once more with my Mira, clear from this many-headed monſter, the Town!—Not but there are many things in it I could enjoy, were I at liberty to do ſo my own way; but it requires ſome reſolution to reſiſt the noble ſet to which your GREAT *kindneſs* introduced me, and to inſiſt on being allowed to follow my own inclination. They think me a ſtrange fellow, and wonder where the devil you picked me up. Nothing but complaiſance to you makes me ſuffered; while I almoſt curſe the friendſhip that prevents my immediately ridding myſelf of a troubleſome pack I more than deſpiſe.

They have taken wonderful pains to reclaim, and make me fit for life. As I apprehended no great danger, I permitted myſelf to be ſwayed, and gave myſelf up to them for

for a whole week; but, had I gone on for ever, the ſcene had never changed.

Strolling the ſtreets all the morning, to ſtare modeſt women out of countenance, and to harden the impudence of the reſt; or lounging hours at each others toilets, either telling falſehoods, or more ungenerous truths—learning or teaching the Art of Cookery at table, or deſcanting on the merits of public performers (while the bottle aptly aids vociferation)—And being ſtripped at gaming-tables in the evening;—or flying from one place of amuſement to another, without enjoying any one—were but the more eligible parts of this moſt *delectable* life. As to the reſt, I was ſatisfied with deſcription: but, had I wiſhed to have impreſſed the horror I received from thoſe, the deeper, I had only to realiſe the ſcene for once, and deteſtation muſt have enſued for ever. Oh George! George! like the friend of Cyrus, you poſſeſs two ſouls—or with ſuch worth—ſuch talents—you could not poſſibly aſſociate with ſuch mere *things* as thoſe! To expatiate on the folly to you, would be ſuperfluous; you ſee, and muſt condemn it. To them—As well might we attempt to call back the ſpark of life to the corrupted maſs it long had quitted!—

But my *improvement* has been attempted by far more dangerous reformers. The very evening of my arrival in town Amelia hinted to me that Lady Priſcilla Blomer really thought me

me a fine ſubject for refinement, and adviſed me by all means to attach myſelf to a Lady whoſe taſte and acquaintance with polite life rendered her the very beſt inſtructreſs I could poſſibly deſire. This was *à la Cheſterfield*, indeed! At firſt I believed it a ſally only of Amelia's wit on my ruſticity, till the repeated invitations of eyes, ſmiles, and whole vollies of alluring graces played off upon me, left not a doubt where the charitable deſign originated. But, doubly guarded, each ſtroke fell innocent upon my heart; for had not Mira's beauties warded all impreſſions but their own—A wife! a mother?—How contempt, how diſguſt, disfigured every charm! and hatred, not love, muſt be the effect of ſuch deſire to captivate.

I never till now comprehended fully the delicate idea of our divine dramatic Bard, when he makes Lyſander aſk Hermione "How ſhe dares truſt herſelf at ſuch a time with one who loves her not?" A common mind had argued very differently. Affection will not injure, and real paſſion ſtands corrected before its object. Yet, though ſuch women as Lady Priſcilla cannot be protected by that eſteem and awe they inſtantly deſtroy, what muſt *he* be who, while (perhaps) he only means to puniſh a conduct he deſpiſes, can bear to plunge a huſband in diſhonour! a family in ſhame!

My

My heart bleeds at the ſight of the amiable man who calls this worthleſs woman his. A ſilent melancholy evinces the anguiſh he ſuffers: for ſtill he loves her; and 'tis feared the mad extravagance he fondly yields to, will (if it has not already done ſo) ſhortly hurt his fortune; which, though a good one, muſt ſink before ſuch waſte and diſſipation. This is ſurely weakneſs in the extreme; and even affection ſhould interpoſe between its object and her ruin.

I have now ſome hopes of Amelia; ſince the ſource from whene her foibles ſpring is diſcovered; and am much miſtaken if Lady Priſcilla, now her guide to error, proves not ere long her monitor to ſhun it.

But my Mira! O Lovemore! how does ſhe hourly riſe upon me! Wretch that I was, to fear that pleaſure, or example, would ever influence a mind ſet on a baſis beyond their power to undermine. True, I have a rival in almoſt every man who ſees her; but when ſhe turns her eyes from them to me, and I read there the preference of her heart, ſhould I not bleſs the trial that proves the dear diſtinction?

Your acquaintance with Lord and Lady Elmour makes it unneceſſary to ſay I think the one a riddle, the other a prodigy. My curioſity to unravel ſo myſterious a character as his, is checked by my fear of raiſing ſuſpicion; for what dependence can be had on the

good

good ſenſe of a man who hoodwinks his underſtanding?

You tell me poor Sophia is uneaſy at my unuſual ſilence: O George! how does her ſituation damp all my enjoyments, and add to my own uneaſineſs and perplexities at the cauſe! Dear, unfortunate girl! I will haſten to her, and ſoothe her, if I can. Yet will not my very looks betray me, and, inſtead of relieving, but increaſe her anguiſh? My uncle queſtioned me about her with a ſeverity that ſilenced all intreaty—How I hate deception! —Yet, let this cruel affair end but as I will yet hope it will—and Lovemore, who will be ſo bleſt as your Grandby!

LETTER XXXV.

Lady Helena Melcome to Miſs Eglington.

WHAT am I about, Mira? To what am I conſenting? What! give my hand for ever to a man who may not for ever—love, as he loves me now!

Yes, my friend, ſoon will your Helena's lot be caſt, irretrievably caſt, for happineſs or woe! I tremble at the thought, and wonder at Barville's temerity, while I joy at the proof of affection it gives me, for Mira—I have not, nay, could not deceive him; and ſcarce a day paſſes but glares, in ſpite of all I can do, with ſome fooliſh whim or other.

My

My mother is now ſo well recovered, that we purpoſe leaving Bath in a few days. Sir William, after adjuſting ſome preliminary matters, will follow; and then—ah Mira! might I find you at home on my return, how would you ſtrengthen my reſolution to deſerve the fortune that awaits me! Yes, as before, your ſmile ſhould encourage my ſucceſs, and your frowns recall me when I ſtrayed; and much I fear—yet why anticipate? Away, ye idle dreams ye ſhall not caſt your gloomy ſhadows on the brilliant proſpect before me Barville and Mira mine! O the dear treaſures! With ſuch poſſeſſions, 'twere impious to permit a viſionary fear to check the hopes now ſpringing in my boſom.

While dwelling with rapture, this morning, on my Mira's virtues, to Barville, he ſmiling aſked, "Would he have my leave to love my charming friend?" A ſenſation I can't deſcribe ſtruck on my heart as he ſpoke. I ſnatched his hand with an involuntary emotion, and tears ſtrayed down my cheeks. "My leave to love her! Oh, if when you ſee her, you can for a moment pauſe—if your heart does not pay its inſtant tribute of affection—it ſhall no longer beat for me! And if mine ſhall baſely dare to murmur at what ſuch excellence inſpires—Barville, hate, fly me, as an abject wretch, unworthy even pity."

Mira, though he preſſed me to his breaſt with looks of admiration, as of love—ſure,

by

by the queſtion (though ſeemingly in jeſt), he muſt think meanly of me. To what littlenefſes do our wayward paſſions expoſe us And, till they totally deſtroy the nobler, how keen the feelings we are puniſhed by, in ſo ſevere a cenſure of ourſelves!

I believed we had monopolized all the Blandons, Tivollies, and Blomers, of the age, they are ſo rife at Bath—But your little lover, beau, and poet, is a novel compoſition I ſhould like to ſee of all things. The ſmiles you muſt indeed perpetually reward his flowery efforts with, may procure me a gratification I dare not hope from your coquetry; though you might for once (I think) excuſe, even to yourſelf, the bringing down, by a little harmleſs encouragement, the curioſity, for a morning's entertainment to your country friends.

Mr. Townley has at length ſettled the grand embaraſſment, and—is married! The propoſed ſcheme was to hide from the world; with the ſtricteſt care, the warmeſt mutual affection, under an aſſumed maſk of cool indifference. Nor was even a polite attention to be indulged; for though well enough where from real apathy there was no danger of exceſs, it might alas; in ſome unhappy moment, throw fond affection of its guard, and betray the important ſecret to the dread ſneers of much malicious ſcandal.

Miſs Meadows, ſincere and artleſs as beautiful could not for ſometime be made to comprehend

prehend the meaning or neceſſity of ſuch a a mode of conduct: ſhe was at firſt offended, but at length convinced of what ſuch behaviour at firſt rendered doubtful (her lover's affection), ſhe combated, with the good ſenſe ſhe poſſeſſes, ſo ridiculous a plan. How fortunate for a woman when attached to ſuperior ſenſe! for, reſting on the boſom ſhe adores, ſhe yields to him her own, and that cannot be long folly that lips ſo beloved can utter.

Miſs Meadows bred up in total ignorance of the world, was ſoon perſuaded to yield her more confined judgment to Townly's better information; and, bleſt in the poſſeſſion of his heart, ſhe cared not for appearances. The leſſons were now immediately ſet and practiſed; but the heart—the heart diſdained the trammels art endeavoured to impoſe, peeped out at every effort, and threatned deſtruction to her rules.

Townley perhaps, after fifty ineffectual attempts to leave his Lady, reaches the door: ſome trifling excuſe repeatedly brings him back: by a ſuperior effort he at length is hero enough to join his expecting aſſociates. Uneaſy, abſent, he ſits on thorns, looking each moment on his watch, till he can with decency fly the company he hates, for that of all his wiſhes. The inſtant ſhe hears the well-known knock at the door, joy flaſhes from her eye, and forgetting every precept, ſhe ſprings forward to meet the lord of her heart:

heart: but, while her arms involuntarily expand to receive him, ſhe recollects herſelf, and with a bluſh returns to her ſeat, while he pays his vacant compliment to all around, his eyes ſtill wandering to their attractive object.

And now this faſhionable pair believe, with with a careleſs "How d'ye do?" and an affected nod in return, to blind, by this wretched burleſque of indifference, an ardent attachmeut that cannot be concealed.

The other evening I really enjoyed this ſtrange fellow's diſtreſs.—A gentleman known to have been an admirer of Miſs Meadows determined to puniſh, in its own way, the behaviour he condemned: he devoted himſelf to Mrs. Townly; ſat by her; dangled after her wherever ſhe moved; looked, ſighed, whiſpered, and hung on every word ſhe ſpoke; while ſhe *à la ton*, endeavoured to be attentive and pleaſed.

The poor huſband ſat at a diſtance, turned pale, bit his lips, and forcing his eyes from the appearance of obſervation, as they mechanically turned to his tormentor, his head exactly reſembled that of a doll hung on wires, waddling about in perpetual motion. At length he contrived to get near by degrees, till on his rival's quitting his ſeat to ſpeak to ſome one at the other end of the room, he placed himſelf next his Lady.

Mr. Fordon, finding his chair thus occupied on his return, put on a look of the greateſt aſtoniſhment

"Why

" Why, Townly, where the devil have you crept to? and what buſineſs have you here?

" Buſineſs, ſir!" colouring, but recollecting himſelf) " Why, what buſineſs ſhould I have, but of trifling conſequence? I was only aſking what o'clock it was; for my confounded watch has taken in his head to ſtop."

" But now your errand is finiſhed, you will not take it in yours, I hope, to remain where you are?—Pretty ſight, truly, to ſee a man ſeated by his own wife! faith, but for her averted eye and glowing cheek, you would bring old Darby and Joan to my mind."

" Ha! ha! ha!" (riſing,) " I like to ſit by my own wife! very good indeed! 'twas well you rouſed me" (ſtretching himſelf and yawning): " Faith, I was almoſt aſleep with my watch."

" Away then, and do not interrupt us more; for Mrs. Townley and I were ſettling a plan of much more importance than a mere What's o'clock?" I was juſt obtaining leave, on her arrival in town, to be her Ciciſbeo, and—"

" D——n" (between his clenched teeth, and reddening like an angry turkey-cock) " her Ciciſbeo, Sir! by heavens! I am very—I mean ſhe is very much obliged to you, Sir, —for your politeneſs, Sir—your attention—but really it is very uncertain when we go to town."

" Oh, Mr. Townley," (ſays ſhe,) " you know we ſet out next week! I ſhall immediately

ately go to a thouſand public places, and ſhall want attendants."

"Attendants, Madam! your parties ſhall—"

"Shall!" (interrupted Fordon) "What have you to do with your Lady's parties? By my ſoul, Townley, but that we know your abſolute indifference in thoſe matters, things would rather—look ſuſpicious. Nay, man, look not as if you were plotting ſome duenna ſcheme: perhaps you mean to aſſume the office yourſelf?"

"Why, Mr. Fordon, it might very naturally follow your Ciciſbio plan: and ſince you are for introducing foreign cuſtoms and novel ideas——"

"Foreign cuſtoms!—novel ideas!—This from Townley!—Ha! ha! ha!—Here, here, take your ſeat, and ſit down an honeſt, plain, unfaſhionable huſband."

The air with which Fordon roſe, and offered his chair; the confuſion of Townley, divided between inclination to take him at his word, and throw off diſguiſe at once; the ſhame they thus betraying his feelings occaſioned, and the laugh of all the company, would have afforded the fineſt ſubject for a caricature.

"Sit down," (whiſpered I) "and inſtantly adopt the *ſingularity* hint I gave you; for this (God help you) will never do."

But, recovering himſelf a little, he attempted to turn the whole into jeſt; and, though every

every word ſtuck in his throat, aſked how any one could think him puppy enough to be ſerious?

"No, no; like good Sir John, the very word Wife, was more than enough for him; and ſo he was not obliged to be the wretch himſelf, any one might be ciciſbeo for him. —More—he would hug the man who would take the fulſome trouble off his hands."

And thus, Mira, is this madman, by endeavouring to conceal in his boſom the natural roſes it is not the *ton* to admire, perpetually tearing his heart with the thorns!

Adieu, till I reviſit the beloved ſhades of ——.

LETTER XXXVI.

Miſs Eglington to Lady Helena Melcome.

AH, Helena! Lady Elmour—the dear Lady Elmour!—But let me not anticipate. —We yeſterday dined with her, and her Lord, who were to accompany us, in the evening to the opera. His behaviour had been rather more attentive ſince the evening, on which ſhe ſhone, with ſuch ſuperior luſtre, over the foils that were not wanting to diſplay her worth. His unuſual tenderneſs opened all her heart to joy, and I never beheld ſo animated a picture of beauty. Not long before

fore we were to ſet off, a ſervant delivered her a note:—ſhe coloured as ſhe read, and haſtened out of the room: when ſhe returned, her eyes had loſt their brilliancy; the tear that had dulled them ſtill marked her varying cheek, and all the fire that illumed her aſpect before, had given place to a melancholy languor. She complained of indiſpoſition—a ſudden head-ach;—and excuſed herſelf from going to the opera.

In vain we deſired to defer the doing ſo ourſelves; and though her Lord, on this being peremptorily refuſed us, intreated to remain with her, ſhe inſiſted on his attending us to her box.

We had not long been ſeated, ere a riot behind the ſcenes occaſioned us, with many others to leave the houſe in terror. Mrs. Boothby fainted as ſhe was getting into the carriage; and Lord Elmour's houſe being nearer than her own, he ordered the ſervants to drive thither, Mrs. Boothby ſoon recovered: my Lord, after ſeating her on a ſopha, bid a ſervant inquire how his Lady did, and acquaint her with what had happened.

Some time elapſed.—No anſwer was returned.—Lord Elmour rung.

"Had not Wilſon come down yet?"

"She is not within, my Lord."

"Not within? and her Lady ill! Go, and inform—Stay, I will ſtep up myſelf."

The ſervant heſitated—"My Lady is abroad, Sir."

Had

Had Nature ſhook to her foundation, Lord Elmour had not ſhown more horror, and aſtoniſhment! He turned pale, trembled, ſtampt, and, in accents ſcarce articulate, vociferated.

" Abroad! Abroad!"

Till, quite exhauſted, he ſunk in Grandby's arms; then, ſtarting up, he caught the footman by the the throat.

" Villain, tell me, this moment, what you know! Who brought that letter? When did ſhe go out? Who went with her? Speak —quick—or——"

The fellow informed him 'twas a woman brought the letter; that his Lady changed her dreſs as ſoon as we left the houſe; and, having ordered the chariot to be ready immediately, drove off, attended by her woman, and two footmen; but whither he could not tell.

" For ſhame, my Lord!" (cried Mrs. Booth by, diſmiſſing the man), " thus to expoſe yourſelf to the contempt, even of your ſervants. And can you—dare you harbour the leaſt ſuſpicion of that ſpotleſs boſom! No—it is your own conſcience only whiſpers your unworthineſs, deſerves chaſtiſement: but from Lady Elmour's error you never can receive it. Oh, that your heart was open to the ſevere correction which her virtues daily yield you!"

" My heart! Is it not this moment torn by a thouſand paſſions?"

O Sir,

O Sir, (ſaid I) repel them all but affection; for that, believe me, is amply returned you, with a purity nothing can ſully.

" It was, Miſs Eglington; but my own extravagant love—that feared its own exceſs—like Blomer's, might diſguſt—while jealouſy might keep alive.—O God! how its keeneſt ſtings now puniſh me for the pains its falſe alarms have ſo often given to that gentle boſom! But her indifference ſaw with unconcern—"

" No," (interrupted Grandby) " a falſe alarm agitates your own. Riſe ſuperior, my Lord, to ſuch—"

" Ha! how am I fallen! Can a baſe woman's infamy, then, diſhonour me!—But you, whoſe inſinuations would thus level me, perhaps—Yes: it muſt be ſo:—from the moment you beheld her, your admiration was apparent:—and ſhe never diſtinguiſhed any one like you.—Grandby, a word—"

He ſeized his arm, while paſſion almoſt choaked him. I trembled; Mrs. Boothby roſe to interpoſe; but Grandby, with a calm dignity that awed the wretched man, replied,

" My Lord, I ſeldom admire long where I cannot revere: but not the united charms of perſon, and of mind, which Lady Elmour poſſeſſes, could move a heart guarded like mine, by excellencies even hers muſt yield to. As to your affront to my character—Sir,

you know me not—and, therefore, I forgive you: and well may you doubt the worth you are unacquainted with, while blind to that which ſo long has ſhone before your eyes with undiminiſhed luſtre! Soon will your unjuſt ſuſpicions be more ſeverely puniſhed, by your own feelings, than I wiſh them; and may the weakneſs, which alone ſhades Lord Elmour's character, end with the deluſion that now torments him!—Mrs. Boothby, ſhall I attend you?"

"Forgive me, Mr. Grandby.—Miſs Eglington, forgive, the madneſs of my paſſion.—Did you know what I this moment ſuffer, you would pity, and not—"

"For what?" aſked Mrs. Boothby.

"Indeed you exhauſt my patience. Cannot a lady change her mind, without—"

"Heavens! Madam, was it not an evident appointment? A concerted plan? Would I thus feel, thus act, were but a hope remaining?—But do not leave me—My burning brain—"

A knock at the door increaſed his agitation. We followed his Lordſhip down ſtairs, who intercepted one of the ſervants that had attended his lady, as he was returning from ſome meſſage he had juſt delivered within.

"Wretch! whence are you come?—whither are you going?—Where is ſhe?"

"Sir! Who, my Lord?"

"Your

"Your Lady, villain! where have you left her?"

"My Lady, Sir! She — Your Lordſhip—"

"Confuſion! How he heſitates! This inſtant declare, or—"

The man ſprung from him, ſaying, as he went off, "I ought not to diſobey my Lady's orders; but, if your Lordſhip chooſes to follow me to —— ſtreet, your curioſity will be gratified."

In ſpite of the man's reſpect for his maſter, there was ſuch an air of irony and ſcorn, blended with the ſtarting tear, and faltering voice, with which thoſe words were delivered, that we all remained more perplexed than before. Lord Elmour inſtantly drew his ſword, and, partly concealing it under his coat, flew, on foot, after the ſervant; while terrified at what might be the conſequences, we threw ourſelves into the coach, waiting at the door, and followed to —— ſtreet. His Lordſhip's ſpeed had almoſt outſtripped the horſes, for we only overtook him as he entered the houſe.

In vain Grandby would have perſuaded us to remain in the carriage, while he went in alone: the drawn ſword, the erring madman, the injured Lady Elmour, were the fears which alone engroſſed me, while I perſiſted in jumping out, and aſcended the ſtairs after my Lord.

He was ſtanding on the upper landing-place, his left arm leaning againſt the wainſcot, the other ſupported by the ſword (whoſe point was now fixed to the floor); while the ſervant who preceded, with eyes earneſtly bent on his maſter's face, thro' a door, half open, pointed out to him the object of his inquiry. I bent over—and take, Helena, the ſcene preſented me.

On the floor of a mean apartment ſat Lady Elmour, nouriſhing, at her maternal breaſt, an infant, whoſe half-naked limbs her robe defended from the cold: and, as her right hand held out a piece of bread to a ragged boy, who received the gift with rapture, her eyes were turned up to heaven, the big drops chaſing each other down her cheeks, while anguiſh, tenderneſs, and pleaſure, were blended in her face.

Before her was placed a large terrene, from which a ſervant ſupplied four children, who eyed the contents with famiſhed looks. Their mother, pale, wan, enfeebled, was now on her knees, bleſſing her benefactreſs, and the God who gave her to her prayers; now comforting, with better hope, her almoſt expiring huſband, who, on a wretched bed of ſickneſs, and of woe, ſupported by Lady Elmour's woman, was taking a cordial from her hand.—And ſtill his faded eye gleamed with a tranſient ray of ſatisfaction, as it bent on his reſcued babes.

At

At the other end of the room, a phyſician ſat, writing a preſcription on his knee; and then, with looks of admiration and benignity, he contemplated the emblem of mercy before him, as ſhe comforted, cheered, and relieved the ſurrounding objects of her tender care.

The light on the ground by Lady Elmour, and another glimmering by the doctor, as he wrote, gave us a view of all within, while the darkneſs without, prevented our being obſerved, as, with different ſenſations, we remained transfixed, till my Lord, no longer able to ſuſtain his tottering frame, nor the rack of contending paſſions in his breaſt, with a loud, convulſive ſob of anguiſh, was ſinking at our feet. The divine lady ſtarted at the noiſe, and the door was inſtantly thrown open—The unexpected ſight of her Lord, near fainting in our arms, ſuſpended every feeling but for him, and, ſcreaming with terror and alarm, as the ſword dropped from his unnerved hand, ſhe attempted to reſign the ſatisfied, and now ſleeping babe to his mother; but, ſomewhat recovering, he haſtened to relieve her, and, flinging himſelf at her feet, joy and admiration ſtruggling with ſhame, remorſe, and fear, in his conſcious face; he tried; but either could not, or dared not ſpeak, and then, in ſilence, continued gazing on the injured angel.

Grandby attempted, not to ſuppreſs his rapture, but, kiſſing her hand, on his bended

knee, ſpoke the warm feelings of his heart, while Mrs. Boothby and I, ſeating ourſelves by her, were following her example: but ſhe had already finiſhed all.—The heavenly taſk was done,—and all, ſatisfied, were now, with gratitude and love, bleſſing the hand that had fed, and ſnatched them from the grave.

"Ah, Lady Elmour! was this well done? Was it generous? Was it kind to ſend us away, in ſearch of fleeting pleaſures, while you monopolized the whole of this luxuriant feaſt—of this ſoul approving ſcene!"

"Dear Miſs Eglington, don't condemn me: I was ſenſible not one of you but had preferred this to the entertainment we deſigned: but it was not proper that all ſhould come, as numbers might diſturb the bed of ſickneſs, and but impede the haſte ſo requiſite. Why then ſhould I, by declaring the occaſion, have equally unſtrung your hearts to pleaſure, for the evening, and unneceſſarily prevented the pleaſure your minds, unſaddened, had enjoyed? Beſides—the line I received," (taking it from her pocket), "though ſtrong, contained ſo little information, that, ever accuſtomed, on ſuch applications, to inquire into truth, I wiſhed not to involve you in the deception that might have been intended."

Mrs. Boothby, after examining the paper, with a look in which I plainly read the word Appointment, held it to Lord Elmour; but his guilty eye averted from the ſight, while,

with

with his hand, he covered his fallen countenance.

She then read aloud—" Help, Madam! for mercy help this moment, or the next we periſh."

He ſhook, as if convulſed.

" Generous mind!" (ſaid the miſtaken lady) " amiable ſenſibility! If I have done well, how am I now indeed rewarded by the dear approbation I ever moſt delight in!"

" O God! this is too—too much!"

And, ſtarting up, he flung to the other end of the room; ſhe ſtill imputing all to ſenſibility. The houſe-keeper, to whom the ſervant had been diſpatched, now arrived, in a coach laden with cordials, bedding, cloths, &c.

After the doctor, with promiſes of future attentive care, had taken his leave, we, at her deſire, left Lady Elmour to ſettle her plan of relief, and withdrew in the mean time to the adjoining apartment. Ah, Elmour! what are now your reflections, as, with folded arms, and darkened heavy look, you traverſe the room? Can that quick, haſtened ſtep carry you further from yourſelf? Well may you ſtart—'tis ſhe! Lo! ſhe comes—arrayed in innocence and truth! She appears—approving conſcience irradiates her mien—goodneſs and virtue ſuffuſe her glowing cheek, and applauding angels ſcatter their glories round her!—Was this the woman you could doubt! and this the hour of your blind ſuſpicion!

Oh, not more is it marked by her ſuperior worth, than by your confuſion and remorſe! —She entered—and, ſmiling, approached the agitated man: he ſtop'd—gazed wildly on her for a moment—

" Eliza, we muſt part.—Hitherto I have only ſeemed, but now I am indeed unworthy of you. I feel it here" (ſtriking his breaſt with violence). " Adieu, for ever!"

And was hurrying away. Grandby, ſetting his back againſt the door, oppoſed his going.

" For heaven's ſake, my Lord—

" Oppoſe me not, Mr. Grandby, I charge you; but, when I am gone, reveal—"

Mrs. Boothby whiſpered him (no doubt adviſing ſilence); but he ſternly ſtopped her.

" Madam, unworthy as I am, I am not the abject wretch you think me. Deception! No! Behold that injured excellence—and ſay if any thing can add to my crime, but the taking her, unconſcious of my madneſs, to this infernal boſom!"

" Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the aſtoniſhed lady, and was ſinking on the floor, when he ſprung forward, and caught her in his arms; but, diſengaging himſelf the moment ſhe recovered, from her fond embrace, he continued,—

" O, when you are made acquainted with the truth, no longer will thoſe eyes beam ſuch affection on me! Eliza, I have ever loved you—and loved you only: the cool compoſure

ſure with which you ever bore all my trials to alarm you, convinced me they never could affect you. Why if—Affect me! They wrung my bleeding heart! but, fearful to change indifference into hate, by troubleſome murmurs and intreaty, I concealed my anguiſh, and, conſcious my love merited other returns, offended pride ſcorned to diſplay its wounds, but hoped by ſuch a conduct,—by mild forbearance to regain."

"Ah! how has that conduct been miſtaken! How rewarded!"

"I think not of the paſt: if now bleſt in your—"

"'Tis too late, too late? Eliza, we muſt part.—You never can forgive the wrongs—you ought not—"

"I can—I do. Part! talk not thus wildly. What ſhall tear you from my heart? Are you not the huſband of its choice? Of its fondeſt wiſhes? The father of its deareſt treaſures? The babes——"

"With infamous aſperſions I have diſhonoured them, and you. The baſe ſuſpicions, which the recollection of your virtues ſhould have ſmothered in my breaſt, ere they tranſpired, my madneſs has proclaimed—"

"Ha! ſuſpicions!"

"Hear me a moment longer—The moderation with which you bore all my neglect, raiſed apprehenſions, and doubts of your affection; but, though I feared your heart, your honour I thought beyond my ſeeming inconſtan-

cy to have ſhaken; till, on this fatal, curſed night—that letter—your ſudden change—your earneſt intreaties to be left alone—and your abſence when I believed you ill at home—the frenzy of the moment—all conſpired—"

"Stop, Elmour!—nor, in my preſence, dare to affront me further. All your behaviour now—yes, your agitation—that ſword—And was it to plunge it in my boſom you purſued me? O were it now reeking with my heart's vital ſtreams, it could not have more deeply wounded me, than your words have done!—Elmour, I forgive you—but never ſee me more."

Rays of fire ſeemed to flaſh from her indignant eyes as ſhe ſpoke:—ſhe looked ſuperior as ſhe moved away; and the noble ſerenity of her air ſtruck ſuch an awe, that ſhe was almoſt out of the room before we dared to interfere.

"Stop, Madam—pauſe one moment on the ſtep you—"

"Mr. Grandby—yet heaven and this breaſt approve me. If I have, in vain looked for confidence there" (pointing to her Lord), "what can the world's opinion add? Its miſtakes can ſtrike no deeper."

"Think on your children" (cried Mrs. Boothby), "and can you leave them?"

"Yes;—when I tore their father from my heart, its feeling all gave way with its burſt ſtrings!"

"O you

" O you deceive yourſelf," (ſaid I) " you cannot tear him thence. I feel—I own your wrongs; yet, be great, as you are good! Look, where contrition and remorſe bear down his ſoul.—O deareſt, beſt of women! receive him to forgiveneſs."

I flew to the pale ſtatue of deſpair: he ſuffered me to lead him, and, kneeling at her feet, cried,

" I will not attempt to deprecate your anger; I have deſerved and expected your juſt decree; but here will I wait till you confirm it, or bid me once more live.— Forgive——"

" I have—I do again forgive you: but, unhappy man! I muſt not, for you own ſake, revoke my reſolution. Yes, Elmour, I muſt leave you; for no more would peace ſmile on our hours; its baſis, confidence, has fallen, and—"

" O no! 'twill be more firmly fixed on my grateful heart than ever. Eliza, if ever you indeed loved me, O forgive the tranſport, the frenzy my love alone could have cauſed! By the dear boy, whoſe father's image you once adored in him—by her now hanging at your breaſt—by all my joys below, and by all my future hopes of heaven, hear me—"

He could no more. Moved by the agony that ſcarcely left him life, and the loved pledges he ſo ſolemnly invoked, ſhe fell on his boſom, as he kneeled: but a deep melancholy—a fearful kind of ſtupefaction, ſucceeded; ſhe ſeemed inſenſible to all his grateful

tranſports

tranſports and our congratulations, and, in penſive ſilence, let them lead her to her carriage. We ſaw her home. The nurſe was waiting with the infant, who miſſed its mother's more than uſual abſence. My Lord ſnatched the babe, and wept, as he preſſed it to his boſom.

"Behold, my life," (ſaid he) "this ſilent pleader of its father's pardon: receive it from me as the pledge of our love and reconciliation."

She took the child, but without the leaſt ſign of that tenderneſs that ever, till now, diſtinguiſhed her on ſuch occaſions. Lord Elmour ſeemed hurt at what he attributed to the effect of remaining anger; but Mrs, Boothby was alarmed, and adviſed him to ſay no more on the ſubject, till reſt had compoſed her agitated ſpirits.

Helena, I ſhall leave the natural comments on this ſcene to your own breaſt: its relation is the beſt anſwer the ſubject of your late letters can receive. Thank heaven! its termination took the turn it did: nor ſhall I regret the trial (however ſevere it has been to the moſt amiable of women) if conducive, in the end, to the felicity I hope from the explanation that enſued.

What ſerious conſequences frequently ariſe, Helena, from the moſt trifling cauſes! The wretched family Lady Elmour, almoſt fatally to her own repoſe, has ſaved from death, owe their ruin alone to the capricious whims of faſhion.

faſhion. While the Britiſh fair robed themſelves with the ſilk-worm's gloſſy ſpoils, their luxury enriched their country, and daily bleſſed thouſands of its labouring hands: among others, this weaver fed his little family in plenty, nor murmured to yield a part of that produce, which but ſecured the poſſeſſion of the reſt: but, while content ſmiles on his board, and proſperity rewards his toil, lo! Faſhion waves her rainbow wand, frowns on ſilken veſts, and throws them to the vulgar; while her diſtinguiſhed daughters muſt now be clad only from India's diſtant clime. What though ſuch numbers thereby ſtarve, and poor England bleeds in her impoveriſhed ſons, while open-mouthed monopoliſers alone gain riches that perhaps, in the end, ſerve but to enſlave their country; and rival nations laugh; 'tis Mode decrees! and her deſpotic influence 'twould be vulgar to conteſt, though compaſſion, fitneſs, ſenſe, and ſuperior beauty itſelf, expire at her feet!

O, Helena! could any thing induce me to wiſh for that ſuperior ſtation, where example, no doubt, muſt ſway; it were that on ſuch occaſions my power might aſſiſt in ſupporting induſtry from ruin: and who knows but ſoon a D——e, a R——d, and many of the other graces that now ſo adorn the favoured Court of Great-Britain, (where virtue emits ſuch diſtinguiſhed ſplendors from her own Charlotte's crown); who knows, Helena, but pity may touch their gentle boſoms with wiſhes to relieve?

Would

Would but their lovely forms add luſtre to the ſilken ſhades, thouſands, who are now pining in poverty and woe, would raiſe their drooping heads, reſume their wonted labours, and daily call down bleſſings on their beauteous patroneſſes.

May Nature aſſiſt!—prepare her richeſt treaſures to aid the generous deſign—call out her vernal ſuns—pour her ſoft ſhowers on the tall mulberry's luxuriant branches—teach the induſtrious worm to form the downy cone, and brighten all her colours with the pureſt dyes!—She will—for, 'tis beauty aſks her care; ſhe pleads in the cauſe of virtue, and ſurely heaven will approve.

Ah, Helena! might not a contrary prayer have a better effect? Perhaps a blight—a ſcarcity of ſilk might, by throwing the meaner claſſes at a greater diſtance from dreaded imitation, do more for the wretched ſufferers than all their united complaints, prayers, petitions, and ſtarving babes together, could otherwiſe accompliſh. Theſe are thy triumphs, Faſhion!

LETTER XXXVII.

Mr. Grandby to Sir George Lovemore.

I INFORMED you in my laſt of Lady Elmour's alarming ſtupor on the viciſſitudes ſhe encountered in ſo ſhort a period. Alas!

her

her magnanimity was ſuperior to the delicacy of her frame, and ſhe now ſinks under the ſhock her ſenſibility has ſuffered. Mrs. Boothby found her the morning after in the ſame melancholy way. The miſerable Elmour had already called in phyſicians. She was feveriſh: they bled her; and ſhe ſince frequently ſtarts, as if terrified, and then remains as before, quite ſilent for hours, apparently compoſed and tranquil.

Though ſhe did not call on her return home that fatal evening for the infant ſhe nurſes, (an evident proof of her illneſs) it was imprudently put to her breaſt; and the agitated mother has injured the little innocent, who now lies almoſt expiring in the cradle, over which marternal care no longer fondly hovers. Did you ſee the the unhappy Elmour now!—A leſſon indeed to erring mortals not to trifle with bleſſings till they loſe them.

My lovely Mira devotes her whole attention to her ſuffering friends. Like a pitying angel ſhe ſheds her conſolation round, till a ray of comfort reaches even the gloomy boſom of deſpair. Should death indeed—I cannot ſupport the thought—heaven will not mark a victim the emblem of its goodneſs.

Even the careleſs Amelia was affected by Lady Elmour's ſtory, which Mrs. Boothby in confidence imparted as a leſſon. The firſt part I related at Lady Priſcilla Blomer's the ſucceeding evening, after the uſual topics had been amply diſcuſſed, and every anecdote

embelliſhed

embelliſhed by all the glowing colours of invention, I told the Weavers tale, only charging our motives for following to curioſity alone.

Amelia, who had ſeen the generous martyr to benevolence in the morning, again wept as ſhe liſtened.

" Heavens!" (exclaimed Lady Priſcilla) How can you be ſo childiſh? La! cannot we ſend theſe creatures a trifle when they beg, without viſiting their dirty holes, and making ſuch a pother—and only to be talked of?"

" How, my Lady, can that be the motive," (obſerved Lord Sedley) " when moſt people would bluſh to have it known they felt while they relieved?

" Why really," (ſaid Mr. Breeze) " I think it a very pretty ſtory, and flowing in that gentleman's ſilvery accents in a ſoft pathetic ſtream of woe; I don't wonder at Miſs Eglington's propenſity to tears."

" Ay, Breeze," (cried Lord Blandon) 'tis juſt the ſubject for ſome of your whining numbers: now do ſet it to blank verſe; and if we don't all howl chorus as you read——"

" Howl, my Lord, to my numbers! But your Lordſhip's particular acquaintance with the delectable notes of your reſounding full-mouth'd companions of the chace, eaſily excuſes your partial dialect. No, no, my Lord; ſuch ſonorous tones accord not to the melting periods that would vibrate from my ſympathiſing boſom, and would totally drown the penſive

penſive echoes of every throbbing heart, as they anſwered in ſighs the melancholy ſtrains."

"Good heaven!" (ſimpered Miſs Tivolly) "you will throw me in the vapours again by ſuch mournful ideas, as I was juſt rallying my ſinking ſpirits after Mr. Grandby's dirge. Indeed they had fled beyond recall, but that I could not help laughing as he proceeded at the figure Lady Elmour muſt have made on a dirty floor, a dirty brat in her arms, and ſurrounded by ſuch a dirty ſet. And then —tee! hee! hee!"—(hiding her face with her fan) "ſo comically employed!"

"Ay, Madam," (ſaid Lady Priſcilla) full-dreſſed too for the opera!—All her trimmings, ruined, no doubt!—I wonder whether 'twas her divine Blue and Buff."

Amelia anſwered, "She had changed her dreſs; but if otherwiſe, might it not as well have been ſpoiled in doing ſo much good, as at the opera, where it had been ſacrificed at all events by crowding out of a full houſe on the night of the uproar!"

"Fy, Miſs Eglington!" (replied the other) "How inconſiderate!—What a vaſt difference!—It had then been ſpoiled for ſomething. After it had been ſeen, admired, 'twould not much ſignify."

"Lovely, divine Lady Elmour!" (exclaimed poor Mr. Blomer, with gliſtening eyes, and then with a ſigh) "Happy, thrice happy Elmour!"

"Bleſs me, Mr. Blomer, are you there? I vow I thought you were above all this while."

"I fear

" I fear, Mr. Grandby," (ſaid Lord Sedley) " the illneſs Lady Elmour ſuffers from the effects of her ſenſibility, may prove unfortunate to the poor family who excited it, as the delay——"

" No, Sir," (interrupted Amelia) " My Lord, entirely engroſſed himſelf by his fears for his Lady, has appointed Mr. Grandby and my Siſter to execute the intended plan, which has been conſiderably enlarged by theirs and Mrs. Boothby's farther contributions; and I beg, Mr. Grandby, you will remind me to-morrow of doing my part: for I proteſt, though I intended it to-day, that maſquerade-dreſs woman engaged me ſo, I quite forgot it.

" Thank you, Miſs Eglington," (rejoined his Lordſhip) " for reminding us of our duty. I think we ſhould all follow ſo noble an example."

Do you? (cried Lord Blandon) " I know not what your Lordſhip's eſtate may be equal to, but mine can ſcarcely keep pace with my pleaſures. Noble examples, indeed! to pay ridiculous debts, and liſten to packs of piping beggars, egad! To emulate ſuch *noble examples* I muſt ſoon ſell my ſtud too!"

" The extreme delicacy of my unfortunate nerves" (murmured Miſs Tivolly in tremulous tones of affectation) " allow me not to attend to melancholy ſcenes: I never relieve them but they prey on my tender feelings for a month; and my phyſicians abſolutely forbid

bid my ever indulging a benevolent idea, leſt it ſhould hurt my ſpirits. Lord, how the very reflection already flutters me!—Dear Mr. Breeze—your ſalts quickly——quick—or——"

"Here, Madam—here.—How my apprehenſions are inſpired by the pale hue of—of your forehead, and ſwimming upturned eyes! Allow me, with this zephyr-breathing fan, to agitate the air, and to invoke its fluttering aid:—it comes; and brings returning graces on its wing, that ſettle once more on their Tivolly's reviving features! Egad I'm quite fatigued."

"For me" (ſaid Lady Priſcilla) "ſuch nonſenſe never affects any thing but my purſe: but had it not been ſo lightened lately by ſuch a horrid run, (I believe in my ſoul Lady Gaff cheats) I ſhould be aſhamed to countenance thoſe ſhocking brutes, who have the inſolence to expect we ought to prefer their frightful home-ſpun traſh, to the divine Indian and Pariſian manufactures. I vow I would not deform my perſon with one of their horrid-fancied things, to ſave all the weavers in England. A lucky riddance were they all ſtarved.—Taſteleſs animals!—How I hate every thing Engliſh! Don't you, Amelia?"

"To be ſure; eſpecially ſilks: they make my eyes ache with their odious luſtre. Now the French never have that vulgar new look; but from the firſt appear dull and half-worn."

"Yet," (obſerved Lord Sedley) "thoſe new prints

prints you are now ſo partial to, reſemble thoſe very ſilks that diſguſt you ſo; and you admire in them that very gloſs they imitate, and which you abhor in ſilks. I highly offended a lady, the other day, by miſtaking her *charming neweſt pattern* for a ſtriped luteſtring. Is this conſiſtency, ladies? can you reconcile—"

"Very eaſily" (replied Amelia); "for what's beautiful in one thing may be ſhocking in another. The lady was not offended at your obſerving a ſimilitude ſo ſtriking, but at your incomprehenſible miſtake. Now, could you ſuppoſe a woman of faſhion would be ſeen in a hideous thing her very woman would bluſh to wear! Yes, yes; thoſe linens are divinely pretty."

"Yet theſe, Lady Priſcilla, are Engliſh."

"And for that very reaſon your Lordſhip will never ſee one on me, nor with any woman of real taſte: beſide, they are ſcandalouſly common, and ſoon none but the vulgar—"

"Forgive me, Ladies," (cried Lord Sedley, bowing); "but I wiſh, with all my ſoul, while thoſe poor vulgar you ſo contemn groan under the weight of taxes they can ſo ill ſupport, while your frowns prevent their better ſuſtaining the load, that a heavy tax were levied on every woman who appeared in any manufacture but that of her own country."

"Was there ever any thing ſo ill-natured!" exclaimed one lady:—"So impolite!" another:—"What a horrid idea!" a third:—"And from Lord Sedley too, juſt poliſhed from his travels!"

"Dear

" Dear ladies, condemn me not unheard—have patience till I explain myſelf—nor quarrel with me while I mean but to diſtinguiſh you. Conſider, while the tax ſaved the poor, how it would favour you, by keeping the imitative vulgar at a greater diſtance. By being called a *tax on taſte*, it might be rendered highly productive; for what fair votary to that radiant goddeſs, but through the portal of her diſtinguiſhed temple would be emulous of enriching the nation's empty coffers?"

" Why really," (ſaid Miſs Tivolly) " in this point of view, I do not think quite ſo ill of your new idea. *A tax on taſte!* I proteſt it gilds the pill mightily, Lady Priſcilla."

" It does indeed, Madam.—O how I ſhould delight in dragging my India gauze through the duſty park, to ſhew my privilege! while Taſte! Taſte! reſounded through the diſtanced crowd."

" And then, my Lady, your very ornaments contributing, like thoſe of the Roman matrons of old, to the public good! O how the proud reflection will ſwell the flowing train, like the peacock's expanding plumes!"

" Heavens, Mr. Grandby! (reſounded Mr. Breeze) " it abſorbs all the faculties of my ſoul into wonder and aſtoniſhment, to ſee you weighing ſuch trivial things as public good, and full coffers, while poiſing the more potent balance of a lady's train!

" Trivial things, Mr. Breeze! This from a repreſentative of the people!"

" I know, Sir, as a lord of the creation, and

and a choſen guardian of the people's privileges, how (in their proper place) to reſound the dignity of the one, and to defend the allowed rights of the other; but before ladies, all ſubjects ought to appear trifling, but thoſe which the inſpiration of their fancies breathe: and I really tremblingly apprehended the thundering ſounds of "public good," "and full coffers" would have called forth Lady Priſcilla's fainting powers, as thoſe of another unfortunate ſubject did before Miſs Tivolly's."

"Pardon me, Mr. Breeze," (replied her Ladyſhip); "as to public good it never reached my feelings: but the ſounds emitted from "full coffers" ought more particularly to intereſt the ladies; for will not the beſt of their contents be emptyed in their laps, if they but know ſo well to manage their cards, as to influence their huſbands, or fathers, to attend to the right ſide of the queſtion?"

Lovemore, this woman has not a ſingle virtue to ſhade her many glaring vices: ſhe is at once mercenary and extravagant! But what is this to the looſeneſs of her mind! I would bluſh to reveal half the arts ſhe continually diſplays to warm me to attention.

When the company ſat down to cards, ſhe contrived to leave me out, and on pretence of inquiring into the particulars of the ſtory ſhe had juſt heard, engaged me in converſation. Would you believe it, George?—ſhe tried to perſuade me, the ſentiments ſhe had juſt delivered, were only adopted in conformity

mity to thoſe of the ſet ſhe knew would otherwiſe ridicule her for thoſe ſhe really felt. "No—ſhe never was ſo affected in her life"—and,—by heaven, the crocodile ſhed tears! but they could not deceive me. Her whole behaviour—nay words—Never more ſhall Amelia prevail on me to accompany her to her infamous friend. I will avoid—will, henceforward, fly her as a peſt.

I was glad of an interruption.—My ſervant brought a letter, he was deſired by the bearer inſtantly to deliver.—'Twas the hand of Sophia.—My Lady intreated me to uſe no ceremony; "It might be ſomething of moment."—Pleaſed to break off, I read—with agitation read—the dear girl's alarms at the reports that have already reached her—and, improving her Ladyſhip's hint, I urged, as my plea for retiring, the neceſſity of my immediately anſwering the letter I had received.

"Pen and ink were ever ready in her cloſet."

"I had other papers to recur to, before I could write;" and was looking for my hat.—Heavens, Lovemore! what a look ſhe gave me! Not an infernal paſſion but it expreſſed! My back being turned, I did not obſerve her, but ſuſpect ſhe whiſpered Amelia, who intreated me to take her cards one moment only—juſt while ſhe looked at Lady Priſcilla's new dreſs, as ſhe deſigned one like it, and muſt ſend her orders about it that very night,

or

or it would be too late for the occaſion ſhe intended.

When they returned, a ſcornful triumph ſat on Lady Priſcilla's features—at having ſucceeded in detaining me, I ſuppoſe: What other victory had ſhe obtained over either herſelf or me?

Sophia is anxious to ſee me: I have promiſed to go down ſoon, and only await the hoped-for amending health of Lady Elmour; for at preſent her Lord allows me to leave him ſcarce a moment. He honours me with a friendſhip which he felt, and which he declares would have glowed out the firſt hour we met, but for the ſtrange infatuation which then poſſeſſed him.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Lady Priſcilla Blomer to Lord Winterton.

YOU grow importunate, my Lord—Daſh not down, I beſeech you, by an imprudent precipitation, the cup of felicity I am at ſuch pains to prepare for you, juſt as it is filled to your wiſhes. You muſt have patience yet a little longer: things are not quite ripe for your preſence. Amelia is not only vigilantly guarded where ſhe is, but what is infinitely more againſt you, ſhe is too well ſatisfied with her ſituation to wiſh its change.

In

In the mean time, your Lordſhip may depend on the continuance of my ſtricteſt care. There is no danger of her fixing elſewhere. She is too volatile to be long engaged by the ſame object; and, were ſhe to ſee you now, ſhe would but treat you as the reſt of her train. Reſerve yourſelf as I adviſe, till a ſudden recall to the deteſted country leaves her with no other reſource than that of throwing herſelf into your proffered arms, her only aſylum from the dreaded evil. Leave all to me, and my influence ſecures ſucceſs. But by your hopes, I charge you, interfere not: if you do, I will not anſwer for any preference ſhe may make, when driven to the neceſſity of fixing, before all others are diſcarded. I need not remind your Lordſhip that a capricious girl, in ſpite of all remonſtrance, might be ſwayed by lovers whoſe youth and perſonal charms were more engaging than Lord Winterton's, eſpecially where ſo great an inferiority of fortune precluded all chance from vanity or pride.

My plan requires the greateſt circumſpection, and my taſk daily becomes more difficult. Amelia, from her unfortunate connections, and the leſſons ſhe was expoſed to while in the country, has imbibed prejudices that often combat all my ſkill. To guard her from the dangers of example, I continually engage her abroad; for ſhe has a ſiſter —Alas! her powers of faſcination—I mean her artful wiles; for what ſuperior charms

has ſhe to boaſt? Oh, how my very ſoul deteſts—my pride contemns them!—The ruſtic, whoſe angelic beauty and innocence——Whither am I rambling? My maddening brain—My Lord, forgive what my ſcorn of this bewitching idiot prompts. Yes; ſhe—this fool-enſnaring ſyren has a lover—Deteſted Grandby, how my heart riſes againſt you!—What! Mira triumph over me!—No, no, no, my Lord; this inſolent pretender to her ſiſter is your great obſtacle to Amelia. From the intended connection, he takes on him to dictate to her, and to watch me, for he knows and ſuſpects the ardour of my friendſhip. Your Lordſhip will eaſily conceive it is the intereſt of this ſelfiſh young man, to prevent Amelia's ever marrying, as the reverſion of my late aunt's fortune will otherwiſe deſcend to Miſs Eglington's heirs. This, at firſt ſight, appears ſomewhat difficult to effect—A beautiful young heireſs, ſurrounded by admirers wherever ſhe moves! But, Sir, her father will probably object to every propoſal ſhe receives in town, and ſhe to thoſe in the country. Grandby's ungenerous deſigns, however, deſerve retort. Your Lordſhip will recollect the addition Miſs Eglington's fortune will be to her ſiſter's, if ſhe never marries. I am to inform you this country girl poſſeſſes, to a degree, that romantic turn of mind, that will, no doubt, prevent her from forming any other attachment, this of her heart once intirely broken off. Will Lord Winterton's ruined

ruined fortunes reject the proffered good! Yet liſten further—in pity liſten to my even greater motives for ſevering them for ever.

Your Amelia's pride is hurt by a union ſo diſgraceful to her future proſpects; for this fellow has neither birth nor fortune to ſupport his arrogant pretenſions. Your own, my Lord, muſt be equally offended, and aid your inclination to oblige the lady you admire: and how grateful muſt ſhe be for a favour of ſuch conſequence to her future appearance in life! All her own efforts to accompliſh ſo deſireable an event, proving ineffectual, ſhe endeavoured to render it leſs ſhocking, by engaging me to form the ruſtic manners of her intended relation: in vain—the charms of refinement reach not his abject heart—his odious eyes for ever turned away, follow not as mine would lead their ſoul-ſubduing—and deaf as the adder to perſuaſion's ſofteſt accents.—Inſolent contemner! Revenge! O come, thou only ſoother of my tortured mind! tear—tear him from the fell enchantreſs he dares prefer.

My Lord, wonder not at my tranſports; for the undiſtinguiſhing wretch, even while he offers at an inferior ſhrine his idolizing love, dares to affront me with his hateful paſſion, and confidently believes my efforts to mould him to my wiſhes, proceed from a ſofter cauſe than mere friendſhip for Amelia. Heavens! what inſolence, to ſuppoſe I would conde-

ſcend to divide his hardened heart with ſuch a hateful object!

And ſhall ſhe triumph over me? No—Soon ſhall her boſom, now ſwelling with hope's delightful promiſes, change all for deſpair, like that I feel, and ſhare its agonies with mine. And you, my Lord—yes, you ſhall aid the noble victory. Long had I ſought the means, when lo! an accident beyond my brighteſt expectation has thrown the glorious opportunity before me.

At the moment when my ſoul was labouring with ten thouſand paſſions, revenge preeminent, ſtruggling to conquer every other; the tranquil Grandby—the cool, affronting, moralizing preacher, received a letter in my preſence: his riſing colour directed my eye, and a woman's hand-writing fixed my whole attention. He favoured my curioſity, and read;—while I well obſerved the emotion that could ſpring from no common cauſe, and inſtantly determined on ſeizing the clue it might afford me.

The ungrateful monſter was eager to leave me; and the letter gave him a pretence. By my contrivance, however, he was obliged to take Amelia's cards. I bade my woman amuſe the girl with ſome new dreſſes ſhe wiſhed to ſee, while I purſued my plan. Mr. Grandby was attended in town by a new ſervant: him I reſolved to attempt; and by rewards and promiſes, engaged his oath of ſecrecy, as well as ſervices. The fellow, by my orders,

ders, was to follow, and watch his maſter for the letter: the wretch did not go home to anſwer it, as he pretended; but immediately joined his Mira, at Lord Elmour's—(Heaven grant me patience!)—Nor did he return till late—or write at all that night—Baſe impoſtor! Will vengeance never overtake you?—It will, it will—for fortune favours your deſtruction!

While undreſſing, the ſervant waited to take it from his waiſtcoat pocket, where I had ſeen him put it; with orders to replace it when I had learned the deſired contents.

The wary practiſer did not forget it, but, after a ſecond reading, toſſed it in the fire.—The man now gave it up for loſt, when his maſter luckily turning away (the fire being newly lighted, not having caught the folded leaves immediately), on pretence of ſtirring the coals, the charming fellow ſnatched it from deſtruction; and by ſubſtituting another from his pocket, deceived the intriguing villain, who turned about on hearing a noiſe, but then ſeeing the blazing paper, was ſatiſfied. The ſervant, ſecure from detection, brought me the reſcued letter, with one corner, only, a little ſcorched: but, when I read —Conſummate treachery! In ſhort my Lord, 'twas from ſome forſaken girl, who, in deſpair, wildly expreſſes her anguiſh at the news ſhe had heard—(the new attachment to Miſs Eglington, no doubt) and intreats to ſee him quickly.

As no name was ſigned but that of Sophia, nor place of abode mentioned, much yet remained to be learned, before any advantage could be made of this important diſcovery. I charged my Mercury, who always carried his maſter's letters to the Poſt-office, to watch for the anſwer to this, and copy off the direction: 'twas well he haſtened back: Grandby was juſt ſealing his letters.

"Muſt I carry thoſe letters to the office now, Sir?"

"No; I am going that way, and will leave them there myſelf."

Was there ever ſo ſuſpicious, ſo cautious a creature!

The vigilant dog followed cloſe behind, unobſerved, and, before the letters were put up, obtained the much deſired direction. What I have to requeſt of your Lordſhip, is, that you will immediately repair to Oxford, and make all poſſible inquiry about Mrs. Sophia Willows, who lodges with a Mrs. O'Shaughneſſy. Convey all your intelligence to me with ſpeed, and depend on my rendering it no leſs conducive to your future intereſt, than to my own revenge and triumph.—Nay, compaſſion, juſtice, demand my interference here, not only in behalf of the injured incognita, but the deluded Mira.

The honour of the family Mr. Blomer is connected with, and which your Lordſhip will ſoon be allied to, you will believe cannot be indifferent to me. Amelia, too—my moſt inti-

intimate—my deareſt friend—All—all unite, to claim the utmoſt of my powers to ſerve them in this diſgraceful cauſe. Add, too, my Lord, the gratitude I owe you for the noble recompenſe already given, and my intereſt to deſerve the addition you have promiſed, when I put you in poſſeſſion of the lovely heireſs.—And can you wonder at the warmth with which I proſecute my purpoſe? Yes, my whole ſoul is wrapt up in the generous deſign; and life, and ſucceſs, are equally dear to

P. BLOMER.

I beg, as a particular favour, you will return me this letter, with that you will honour me with on the ſubject of your inquiries. It may ſome time hence, perhaps, be requiſite, for the ſatisfaction of thoſe it is meant to ſerve. My own juſtification too—for where is the probity not liable to ungenerous ſuſpicion?

LETTER XXXIX.

Miſs Eglington to Lady Helena Melcome.

JOY to my beſt-loved friend!—May the approaching day that gives her for ever to her Barville's wiſhes, be that deſtined by Heaven to reward her virtues! May they, from their enlarging ſphere, ſhine with increaſing ſplendors, and my Helena ever be the happieſt of her ſex! Yet—Ah, Helena! ex-

pect not too much.—Though thy ſoft boſom now expands to contain the tides of a ſtill, unebbing felicity; it will not be, my friend. The current, even though clear, will not for ever flow in equal ſtreams. Expect not too much, leſt the leaſt variation ſhould ſadden what Heaven gives thee to enjoy.

" Gloomy, cruel Mira! thus, in this dear moment, to check the ſpringing tranſports of my heart!"

I will not—'twere indeed ungenerous:—I would only guard.—But, perhaps, 'tis only the preſent gloom of my own mind, which imparts a ſhade to the pen, that ſhould only now ſport with loves and graces, and call them to attend Helena's future hours. Yes, notwithſtanding the pleaſure your happineſs gives me; notwithſtanding my own bright proſpects (which now ſcarce a human chance can obſtruct, ſince my parents ſmile propitious on them), yet—yet a ſadneſs hangs at my heart. I would chide, but that the cauſe—'Tis not that my Grandby leaves me for a few days, to viſit a friend in the country; for though I do ſo joy in his preſence, and always ſo regret his abſence, I will never encourage that ſelfiſhneſs that would monopolize him from every other friend. But ſurely I borrowed the gloom from his breaſt, that ever reflects its joys and pains on mine. There was ſuch a dejection about him, as he informed me he was under the neceſſity of going—He preſſed my hand to his heart, with

ſuch

ſuch an expreſſion of melancholy ſondneſs; while ſomething ſeemed ſtruggling in his breaſt. And then his eyes, that uſed to ſparkle with delight, threw their languid beams on my face.—Tears, Helena, blot my paper. —What meant my Grandby's ſighs?—Lady Elmour, too—Lady Elmour has recovered her ſenſibility, but to feel her increaſing woes —The babe who ſhared its nurture with the child of poverty, has been the ſacrifice—not to its mother's charity, but to the father's cruel—But, let me not preſume to cenſure, while Heaven evinces its diſpleaſure, and puniſhes the unhappy man—Yet ſhe—what has ſhe done? Impious Mira! dareſt thou to arraign, where thou ſhouldſt humbly bow! Perhaps the wife—the mother—in aſſuming an indifference and compoſure ſhe was ever a ſtranger to, erred; ſhe might have encouraged what ſhe only meant to overcome: too ſure the deception has not been ſucceſsful.

As ſoon as Lady Elmour's recollection revived, ſhe repeated the forgiveneſs to her Lord, who, ſince the death of the child, had hung in deſpair over the inſenſible mother, awaiting what he termed the accompliſhment of his glorious work. She begged him to be compoſed, ſince an event, however racking to her heart at firſt, could not but receive a ſweet alleviation, by the hidden treaſure it diſcovered ſhe might otherwiſe have continued ignorant of poſſeſſing.

" But where are my children?—My infant?—Has ſhe not miſſed me?—Ha! What mean you? For heaven's pity, ſpeak!—"

We owned the child had ſuffered.—Lord Elmour ruſhed out of the room:—he could not conceal the truth;—his face declared it.—She fainted; but her firſt words called for Elmour.—

" Now, Elmour—now, indeed, my heart bleeds for you; and the anguiſh I feel for you, congeals the mother's tear for her murdered babe, ere it ſprings to her eye!"

He came.—What a ſcene, Helena! But, is it not aſtoniſhing that what we feared would throw her back, ſhould ſerve to rouſe her from her late diſordered ſituation? She complains not, but ſooths her ſelf-reproaching Lord; yet her virtue does not ſeem an exertion. She would be led to the body of the departed infant; ſhe contemplated it long in ſilence: then—

" Elmour, regret it not—it now reſts on its Maker's boſom; and ſhort as was its little ſpan, my cherub did not live in vain. Elmour—'twas its food that ſnatched from death an expiring brother to a world, where, perhaps, 'tis deſtined to act a greater part.—Ah! who ſhall explore the ways of Providence!—I will not lament the accident that led—O God! thy will be done!—Elvira, I take not an everlaſting leave;—we may ſoon meet."

With

With calm reſignation ſhe walked away, but, turning at the door, pauſed—and, laying her hand on her heart, ſeemed to gaſp for breath. We wiſhed for tears, to relieve her, but they came not. She then called for the boy—folded him in her arms.

" Take him, Elmour.—Yet Heaven gives us to enjoy this."

She afterwards talked of the weaver's family, and thanked Mr. Grandby for what he had done, who now acquainted her with Lord Sedley's noble donation.

Superior woman!—Yet, Helena, I fear her frame will not ſecond the greatneſs of her mind: ſhe is pale, and her appetite quite gone, and, though ſhe complains not of pain, ſuffers from an oppreſſion at her breaſt, that occaſions her breathing ſhort and quick. Lord Elmour never leaves her. May their union be long, as it is now complete!

I wiſh the delicacy of the affair permitted your imparting it, as a warning, to the trifling, miſled Townleys. Sure ſuch an example would deter them from purſuing a conduct that may lead to even greater woes.

I incloſe this letter in my mother's. You will receive it from her hand :—kiſs it, for me, Helena, and ſupply the place of her

MIRA.

LETTER XL.

Lady Helena Melcome to Miſs Eglington.

WELL, Miſs Eglington! Perhaps I have nothing to complain of now? No, no! —I have no reaſon to doubt—to be offended now! O this ſpecious, deceptive Barville! If you ſay a word in the fellow's favour now, Mira, I will never forgive you—Piſh! that is impoſſible: and, I rather have to fear, you will never forgive me if I do not ſpurn him away, the moment he appears before me.—The moment he appears! little ſign of that, though. I only regret there is no probability of my ever having an opportunity to ſhew my reſolution; and I may exerciſe my tragedy triumphs by myſelf, while Barville's dancing away at Bath, or—heaven knows where.

Yes, Mira, a week—near a whole week has elapſed ſince the day that was to bring the impatient, enamoured, dying Sir William Barville to Melcome grove! No Sir William! Not a line—A ſlight, unceremonious, verbal excuſe, indeed—a little engagement, or ſome ſuch nonſenſe. This the wretch, Mira, that was ſighing and whining at my feet, with crocodile tears, to fix an earlier period to the lamentable abſence: 'twas quite impoſſible he ſhould ſupport ſo long—And yet how nobly he braves the diſmals! At ſuch a time too

too, when a very few days after his arrival was to crown all his pretended wiſhes. No hurry, you ſee! I'm ſure 'tis very lucky for me to find him out in time to prevent—for, you know, if he can be ſo indifferent at ſuch a moment, what—You can't imagine how pleaſed I am to find I bear this affront ſo coolly—ſo compoſed. I only wiſh he were here, to witneſs the eaſe—the tranquillity, with which I walk about the room, for hours. Only, every carriage that arrives—to be ſure I long to hear what his unbluſhing aſſurance can ſay for itſelf now; and then he ſhall find Helena, with all her faults, can aſſert the worth——Mira, think not the tear that blots my paper falls from tenderneſs for ſuch an ungrateful monſter! No, indeed! nor reſentment neither. What is it to me? But to be ſo impoſed on—that's the thing.

Heavens! how he looked when he put me in the carriage! he trembled ſo, he could hardly aſſiſt me: joy, no doubt, at getting rid of ſuch a ſpy.

Lord! I did not want him to neglect every body elſe, for me: 'twas all his own doing; for I had quite conquered that little tendency to jealouſy and ſuſpicion; and the very evening before we parted, when he wiped the powder off Miſs Sley's noſe, and begged her not to injure ſuch teeth with cracking nuts, I hardly changed colour, and did not feel much —nor very uneaſy.

He

He was to ſet off, the day after us, for his ſeat in ———ſhire; yet the meſſenger who brought this punctual lover's apology—(What occaſion had he to take the trouble of making one?)—declared he was ſtill at Bath.

I wiſh he would come, and conclude the affair at once, that I might ſit down quietly to my book, or harpſichord, as I uſed to do, without thinking of him continually. Really there's no doing any thing while one's thoughts are rambling thus. What a ridiculous ſubject!—I beg your pardon, and will in future entertain you better: yet one hates ſuſpenſe ſo—I have teazed others with it ſo often, I am quite ſick of it now.

Well;—my mother—I wonder what ſhe ſees in Barville to approve ſo mightily! Piſh! Barville again.—My mother called on Lady Eglington the day—A coach! a coach! Barville—my Barville! Oh!

* * * *

A more agreeable interruption—Lady Eglington herſelf—and a letter from my Mira. Nothing leſs could have reſtrained my indignation: yet I could not help weeping with pleaſure as I received from her the precious packet. The dear Lady queſtioned me: my mother's officious—theſe old dowagers are ſo fond of communicating all they know; ſo delighted at ſhowing they are in all their daughters ſecrets; even to thoſe important ones, their quarrels with a pack of lovers. How would ſhe have liked, in her time, to be made to look ſo fooliſh! Yet ſhe knew I had no reſerves

ſerves to Lady Eglington, who chid me, laughed at, and embraced me, all in a breath. She could not bring down the ſullens, though, till ſhe hinted—Ah, Mira! after all, ſhould illneſs indeed be the cauſe of Sir William's delay—how good-nature and politeneſs catch at ſhadows!—Sickneſs, indeed! as if I ſhould not hear of that: O, but tenderneſs for me might prevent his raiſing my fond apprehenſions—Mira, Sir William, though a—Heaven knows what, is no coxcomb, and has more delicacy than to act as if—as if the violence of my affection could not ſupport a ſlight indiſpoſition: any thing of conſequence he would not wiſh to conceal from me. Yet, ſhould this be really the caſe—Nonſenſe! Did not this flying meſſenger declare him well? And ſure if the man has buſineſs of ſuch mighty importance that a woman (even a beloved miſtreſs, in the hour of her humble reſignation) ſinks before it, he might write, mightn't he?

Lady Eglington, and your letter, together, have lowered my heroics a little though; your congratulating letter, that, inſtead of meeting "Helena's ſoft boſom, expanding to contain its tides of happineſs," finds them at their loweſt ebb indeed! Yes, Mira, a boſom ſo very ſoft, that every breath ruffles and diſturbs each ſtream as it paſſes, and leaves ſcarce a trace behind! but no: you did not check their flow—your example (for once) rather had a contrary effect; and Elmour, the

the wretched Elmour, bade me beware of impeding, like him, by a ſimilar conduct, the ſprings that would otherwiſe riſe only to bleſs me.

What a ſtory, Mira! But, do you think my Lord really loved this divine woman, before his heart was thus rouſed—thus awakened? I rather believe, like the dog in the manger—For how could he conceal his affection? Impoſſible! And for what? He had no reaſon to doubt a return. How lamely would he bring himſelf off—"leſt, like Blomer, his fondneſs might diſguſt."—Miſerable ſtuff! More puerile than even Townley's inducement? But, whatever the cauſe, dreadful are the effects of his error; and, ah, Mira! if Lady Elmour's conduct could not meet the happineſs it ſo merited, who ſhall hope to ſucceed! Not poor Helena, ſhe fears.

Intricate path! Perplexing duty! If a woman is tenacious, ſhe diſguſts; if eaſy, alarms. The methods that would ſecure, or regain one heart, may intirely loſe another! In ſhort, the felicity of wedded life is quite a ſcience; and hangs on ſo precarious a tenure, no wonder ſo few can attain it. A pretty proſpect have I of it truly, ſhould this ſame Sir William condeſcend to come at laſt!

Upon my word, my friend, I am at preſent ſo ſeriouſly frightened, he could not chooſe a better time to vex me; and yet I feel quite eaſy and philoſophic too.—Hark! Another coach.—Hang me if I ſtir—Yet I will look.

look.—Who knows but my charming young friends, the Miſs Lovels, have called?—By all my hopes 'tis he! 'tis he himſelf! my Barville! But let him wait in his turn; 'tis long ſince the days of attendance were his.—How I tremble with anger! Heavens! are the people all mad! What a noiſe, and racing about!

"Madam! Madam!"

I know it, Sophy.—Tell Sir William I am buſy writing: aſk him to ſit down: perhaps the gentleman's fatigued after ſo long a journey, and travelling poſt to—How the girl ſtares! Another meſſage? Don't hurry ſo—you'll break your neck.—See how compoſed I am: 'tis ſitting near the fire makes my face glow ſo.

Piſh! I muſt go, for how can I write with ſuch continual interruptions? Beſides, delay may look like affectation, Mira; whereas I am all nature, and in downright earneſt.—What, I wonder, would the fellow ſay now, were I diſpoſed to liſten?

I go—Dignity! if ever thou didſt attend the call of inſulted female pride, come to my preſent aid, and leave me not, I charge thee!

* * * *

I thought how it would be.—Even Mira will acquit me now—No, no; her poor Helena is not always wrong, nor of ſo ſuſpicious a temper as to take ſuch alarm at nothing. No indeed! God knows, I wiſhed good-naturedly the gentleman might have been able

to acquit himſelf tolerably; and, perhaps, after all, I had not been inexorable.

I know not which moſt aſtoniſhes me; his modeſt opinion of his own powers of perſuaſion; and of my eaſy, forgiving tenderneſs; or the ſtrange aſſurance that brought him here at all! If I have patience, you ſhall hear.

As ſoon as I a little recovered the confuſion his affected tranſports at ſeeing me occaſioned, and had enjoyed his guilty looks at the diſdainful repulſe he met with; I perceived the pale and ſickly hue, which a glow of pleaſure, or rather ſurpriſe, had at firſt concealed: this ſoftened me a little; but ſoon—Bleſs me, Mira! how the fellow tried to lament the tedious abſence he had ſuffered from an indiſpoſition, which, though a ſlight one, had prevented his travelling!

Had I known you were ill, Sir William, it might have accounted—that is——

"I hoped every day an amendment had enabled me to fly, and ſave my Helena's—humanity, at leaſt, from alarm, if, from this cold reception, I dare not flatter myſelf a ſofter——"

Lord, Sir! I had hardly died with fright at hearing of an acquaintance's "ſlight indiſpoſition." A little cold; or fatigue after dancing, perhaps? Bath is ſtill crowded, Sir William?

"Dancing, my Lady! I think of dancing while my whole ſoul——"

Well

Well, well;—you need not take the trouble to apologize, now, Sir: nor is your behaviour the leaſt inconſiſtent; for as your vanity alone prompted your fears of alarming my tenderneſs, your ſecurity, too, rendered the attention of even a line unneceſſary, tho' common politeneſs——

An inclination of his head to his right hand, which my ſtill averted eye had not obſerved he kept in his boſom, ſtartled me.

" A little hurt, of no conſequence in the world, but that it diſabled me from writing, as a ſlight fever, occaſioned more by continual fretting at the delay, than from the hurt itſelf.—'Tis nothing, my love! nothing, now you once more—"

I ſcreamed with apprehenſion, as I drew his hand away, and ſaw it all wrapped round with black ribbon: and, oh! how I hated myſelf! as my fond fancy repreſented nothing leſs than a broken arm, and violent fever.

" O God, Barville! why would you travel in this condition? You are yet ill—you cannot deceive me—that cheek, that eye, declare it. Ah! ſhould a relapſe—"

" I fear no relapſe but of your unkindneſs."

" 'Twas my ignorance, Barville.—Where, when was it broke?"

And I tenderly touched and embraced his arm, while tears of contrition and grief mingled together. He coloured—

" 'Twas not broke—only my wriſt and hand were hurt a little—"

" By

" By a fall? Was it by a fall? Perhaps while you were haſtening to me! Ungenerous, ungrateful Helena! Say—

" No—not a fall: ſome trifle: it does not ſignify what now 'tis almoſt well."

His confuſion increaſed, as my penetrating looks would have explored the myſtery; and his evaſion raiſed all my curioſity and fears.

" How then? For Heaven's ſake, Sir William—"

" Helena, grant me this one requeſt, and my whole life ſhall be one grateful remembrance for the favour. Do not, deareſt creature—do not, I beſeech you, inſiſt on knowing how I got this hurt."

Did the man ſuppoſe me a fool, Mira? No occaſion for inſiſting—the whole truth was evident: it was not that he could be ſufficiently intereſted about ſome worthleſs woman (for what other are liable to ſuch affronts?) and ſtay to fight a duel for her, when I believed him not only ſo attached to me, but impatient to fly to me, and make me his for ever; but that I had ſo narrowly eſcaped an union with a man of ſo light a temper, and defective morals.—A duelliſt! Good heavens! I was affected, to be ſure, Mira—and ſo I fainted; but ſoon diſengaged myſelf from his arms, while half diſtracted (no doubt attributing all to my affection for him) he beſought me to be eaſy.

Obſerve my conduct, amid all my diſtreſs. My recent error determined me not to be precipitate

precipitate again: no, I would not, unheard, condemn him. A jealous rival, his own inſulted honour, might provoke, or ſtimulate the deed, though not excuſe him altogether.

" Barville, think not that I would even wiſh to interfere with ſecrets you have ſuch reaſons to conceal; yet I muſt—I have a right to inſiſt on anſwers to thoſe two queſtions: —Did you give, or receive the challenge?"

" Why will you, my Lady—You are not yet recovered—My Helena—Be compoſed, and think no more of this."

" No prevarication: I'm very well. Speak, Sir William."

" The challenge was on my ſide.—An impulſe of ſudden paſſion—Helena, let me not fall in your opinion: I condemn the practice: I abhor a duelliſt. But how—"

He pauſed; and though my ſilence urged him to proceed, he dared not.

" Was it in defence of your own character you fought?

" Good heaven, no! Would I not, then, be the firſt to diſcover to you, the reflection that might injure me in your opinion? and, next to my ſword, would I not appeal to your candour for an acquittal—without which Helena, my arm in vain had ſatisfied my honour?"

" I thank you, Sir: your honour, and my curioſity, are now equally ſatisfied. Barville, I will not, at the expence of that ſincerity the caſe requires, aim at a delicacy with which

which our ſituation ought to diſpenſe. 'Twas not an indifferent object for which you riſked your life. Neither was it ſelf-defence, nor to vindicate a friend; for in a generous cauſe you would not bluſh to own, what candour might forgive.—An impulſe of paſſion! What could provoke—At ſuch a moment—Barville leave me—I never will be yours!"

"Great God! What do you mean?—Stay, Helena: don't go.—Stay, and I'll tell you all, rather than loſe you. Cruel, unkind Helena! To ſuſpect—What ſhall I do?"

He caught my hand as thus he raved, divided between ſhame and fear: I drew it away.

"Liſten, then, to what nothing ſhould tear from me, but—"

"I wiſh not to hear. Do you think, Sir I will ſtay to be affronted by ſuch explanations? However you may reconcile them to your eaſy honour, Helena's cannot be ſatisfied."

He looked for a moment, Mira, as if ready to fight me too; but before I reached the door, put on his beſeeching face again: and ſo I left him to ſettle the matter by himſelf. The cowardly Hector! to bully one moment, and repent the next!

He has ſince made fifty attempts to engage my ear (for he won't leave the houſe), and finding that impoſſible, took it in his wiſe head to write: as if one could read—(inſolent!) what one would bluſh to hear. But I returned his letter unopened; with a note, wiſhing him a good journey, and ſpeedy recovery

covery of the honourable wounds he had received from the noble antagoniſt over whom he had the good fortune to gain ſo triumphant a victory, in ſo glorious a cauſe; adding, there was no occaſion, by a longer attendance, for his waſting that time which might be ſo much better employed in the exercife of that proweſs, which perhaps might, at this very moment, be wanted elſewhere.—Helena's private, unnoticed walk of life, required not the kind of ſervices he was ſo well calculated to diſplay.

I have heard nothing further, ſo hope this will ſettle the affair at once.

He has not ſaid a word to my mother: a certain ſign (were it needful)—the ſubject won't bear diſcuſſing. The good lady, perſuaded, no doubt, he has hurt his fingers by playing puſh-pin, for apples, attributes my coolneſs only to a uſual fit of airs.

What a letter about nothing! I will let you know when the doughty Baronet makes his congé; (he has his credentials, what does he wait for?) and ſhall then expect congratulations from my Mira, of another nature than her laſt, with a thouſand praiſes for the heroiſm with which I ſupport my eſcape from the dangers of matrimony.

This ſame reſentment keeps one up charmingly: I'm quite alive—ſo chearful, ſo tranquil, ſo indifferent! What a delightful thing 'tis to be indifferent, Mira! People in love are alarmed at every turn—Fooliſh paſſion!

I give

I give you to the ſhadowy vapours that formed you! 'Tis ſo long ſince I knew what 'twas to be compoſed, I'm quite in ſpirits at the change.—Lord! how happy I am!

Mira, do not let this ſtrange affair diſcourage you: your noble Grandby—Happy, happy friend! Bleſt in the undivided heart of a generous youth, whoſe morals ſecure you from deception, and whoſe paſſion you may, without a bluſh, return.

Fortunate Grandby! rewarded by beauty no captious levity deforms, and virtues no gloomineſs of temper ever ſhades! Yes; Heaven delights in bleſſing you; for you with gratitude receive the boon, nor throw it back to Providence. Oh! be ſtill happy in each other, and never feel——Adieu, Mira.

Lady Eglington, who was wiſhing to ſee Sir William, excuſed herſelf (on my mother's violent hurry to ſhow her once expected ſon-in-law) from the invitation ſhe promiſed inſtantly to attend. Be not alarmed—Whatever was the reaſon, illneſs did not prevent her.—All are well.—Heigh, ho!—What a ſtrange world, Mira!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.